

The Ensign And the Poodle Dog

By SEATON LORD

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ENSIGN MARK ATHERTON'S ship arrived at the United States navy yard on Dec. 21. There he learned that the gunboat Comandante, which was his Naval academy chum, Tom Dresser, was expected to arrive the next day. Atherton procured leave to visit his home, but left a note for Dresser asking him to follow and spend Christmas with him. The day after Atherton reached home he went over to Q. to see his aunt, who, next to his mother, was the nearest person to him on earth. While at Q. he received a forwarded telegram from Dresser that he had arrived, was very ill and asked that his friend would come to him at once.

Atherton examined the time tables and found that if he went back home he would lose twenty-four hours. By going over to N., five miles distant, he could get a train to the city in a couple of hours. Since he had ample time he decided to walk. When he reached N. he went into the station ticket office and, looking in his pockets for funds, found that he had left his pocketbook at home. In his vest pocket was 20 cents.

Here was "a pickle"—no funds, friend possibly dying, train to leave in ten minutes.

"What's the time of the next train?" he asked the ticket agent.

"In an hour and twenty minutes."

Atherton went out on the platform to think it over. A card tacked to the wall stared him in the face. It was an advertisement for a lost poodle, with a promised reward of \$10 if returned to the owner at 12 Adams avenue. There was a small park near the station, "bleak" looking at that season, but Atherton thought he would go over and sit down on a bench to collect some scheme to raise railroad fare. While ruminating he felt something rub his leg and, looking down, saw a poodle. Unfortunately there was no mark on the collar by which he could identify it, but it struck him at once that the dog was too valuable to be running loose and he believed it was the one advertised.

Then there Ensign Atherton conceived a great plan. He would return the poodle, get the reward and be off on the next train. Picking up the dog, he inquired the way to 12 Adams avenue, found the house, rang the bell and asked if the dog belonged there. The servant recognized it at once and showed the young man into the drawing room.

Atherton was in citizen's dress and had not had time since reaching port to get a new outfit he had ordered. Consequently his clothes were somewhat worn and out of style. He decided to play the commoner, thus making it easier for him to accept the reward. When a girl of nineteen of distinguished appearance came into the room he shuddered and hoped sincerely that he would be able to carry out his role. The moment she saw the poodle she took it up and embraced it eagerly.

"Where did you find it?"

"In the park near the railroad station."

"I'm very much obliged."

She looked Atherton over from head to foot, evidently not knowing whether to offer to pay him a reward. Atherton was up to the occasion.

"It's lucky for me, miss," he stammered. "I'm a sailor and got back to me ship. I've been robbed by land sharks and haven't money enough to buy me ticket."

"Oh!" said the girl, astonished at his humble position. "Wait a minute. I'll go for the money."

She left the room to return with a ten dollar bill, which she handed him.

"I hope you'll reach your ship safely," she said as he took the bill. "I'll have a cousin a sailor. He's in the navy."

"Yes, miss. Goodby," replied the sailor boy, and he hurried away fearing that some naval officer might run across the story and ruin him in the service.

Atherton found Dresser much better than he expected. Dresser had engaged to spend Christmas with an uncle living a few hours' ride from the city, and as the chums were anxious to pass the holidays together they played a game of chance to decide whether Dresser should go with Atherton or Atherton with Dresser. Dresser won, which was well, for he was scarcely in a condition to visit strangers. Atherton informed the number by mail of the change and received her consent.

Soon after the making of the chums Atherton was informed of his adventure, and when he was told that he had won the reward he was much pleased.

"Well, said the girl, 'I suppose I'm mistaken, though you look enough alike to be twins. But who sent this bracelet?'"

"Oh, conscience did that!" said Dresser. "The fellow probably thought what a muffin he'd made of himself and spent the money in a bangle."

At the Christmas dinner which followed Miss Floyd put the chums on tenterhooks by a recital of the episode of her lost poodle, though her innate delicacy prevented her making any mention of the fact that she had mistaken Atherton for the man who had received the reward. This is the way she summed it up:

"I am convinced that the fellow stole the dog to get the reward. Then his conscience troubled him, and he bought a cheap, plated bracelet, probably costing a few dollars, and sent it to me on Christmas day."

During these remarks the actors in the episode sat with rigid faces, very like the figurehead to a ship, neither daring to glance at the other for fear of giving away the truth by an explosion.

It was not till Miss Floyd entered the navy herself some years later as the wife of Mark Atherton—then Lieutenant Atherton—that she learned she had paid her future husband a reward for returning her poodle and then charged him with sending her a cheap, plated bracelet in lieu of conscience money.

When wit is combined with sense and information, when it is softened by benevolence and restrained by strong principles, when it is in the hands of a man who can use it and despise it, who can be witty and something much better than witty, who loves honor, justice, decency, good nature, morality and religion ten thousand times better than wit—wit is then a beautiful and delightful part of our nature.—Sydney Smith.

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attended to me took the invalid to the station.

"For what place shall I buy the tickets?" asked Atherton.

"N. Didn't I tell you my uncle lived at N.?"

"N. No. You said he lived at B."

"So he does. B. is the next station above. We always get off at N."

"Why, I returned the poodle at N."

"That's singular."

"I should think so."

Atherton bought the tickets and they were soon bowling over the road. On reaching the station they took a carriage.

"Where do we drive to?" asked Atherton.

"Twelve Adams avenue."

"By the great horn spoon!" fairly shrieked Atherton. "I drive to no such place."

"Why not?"

"It's the house where I received the reward."

"You don't mean it!" Dresser fell back on the cushion. "By thunder, you've received \$10 reward money from my Cousin Adele Floyd, and I'm going to take you there as a guest."

If such a problem had baffled the assurances of two ensigns in the United States navy they would not have been worthy to serve their country. They decided to meet the enemy at once and pushed on to 12 Adams avenue. There they found Miss Floyd puzzled over a gold bracelet she had just received by express. On seeing her cousin she forgot everything else than him till she caught sight of his chum; then she stood stock still and stared. He was handsomely dressed, but not sufficiently changed to prevent recognition.

"It seems that we have met before," she said, changing her manner.

"Indeed?" said Atherton, with feigned surprise. "Oh, yes! You are the girl I danced with at the ship's ball when we were at Nice."

"Not at all. You were here a few days ago. You returned my dog and received the reward."

"You must be mistaken, Del," put in Dresser. "An ensign in the United States navy could not receive a reward for such a service."

There was an interval in which Miss Floyd stared from one to the other. Both saw that she was not quite certain of Atherton's identity and brazened out their position.

"Come," continued Dresser, "you're not complimenting an officer in the navy by taking him for some impostor who probably stole your dog and brought him back for the reward. Give it up or you'll spoil Christmas for all of us."

"Well," said the girl, "I suppose I'm mistaken, though you look enough alike to be twins. But who sent this bracelet?"

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The Reverie Of Santa Claus

By F. J. TANSEY

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MY pack is filled, my reindeer wait impatient for the rising moon

To light the road to Youngsterland, On which I must be speeding soon.

My heart is filled with Christmas joy! I laugh in once-a-year delight To think what pleasure I shall bring To countless boys and girls tonight.

Two griefs were mine, but long they're gone; One that the bad, bad child must cry

On Christmas morn to rise and find Empty the sock that I'd passed by.

But once I thought what good were games And candles, picture books and toys I should blindly give them out To cross, unruly girls or boys!

Who would grow good as Christmas came If naughty Joe or sulky Sal Were sure to get as good from me As bright, obedient Sue and Hal!

My other woe was hard to bear, Yet for it comfort soon I found: It was that Christmas work did not Employ me all the year around.

But somewhere in a book I read That amens is a trying care, That too much sweetness ever cloyes And pleasures are the best when rare.

And what would hap to Easter day, And to the Fourth's bing-bang, and drum, If every night through chimney pipe Old Santa Claus should sneak in come!

Too much sweetness ever cloyes. No, no! I'll spoil no sport for these. The children good who trust in me, Though for the unbelievers bad, I have no love, as they shall see.

Ho, here's the moon! Away, away, With jingling bells and reins in hand! Stretch to the gallop, Dash and sweep, Over the road to Youngsterland!

A Race of Masked Men. The Tourangs of the Sahara are one of the most curious races of mankind. The men never expose their faces to public view. They always wear a cloth mask, even when they are eating and sleeping. It is said that only one white traveler has ever seen a Tourang unmasked. They think they are dishonored if their faces are uncovered.

All His Eggs in One Basket. Goodman Gourong—We don't get neither at that house. I asked the woman for some cold vittles, a cup of coffee, some clothes' n' a place to sleep in the barn, an', by gum, she said I was comin' in a little too strong, an' she shut the door in my face.

Tufford Knut—That's not ye git, ye himse fool, for puttin' all yer eggs in one ask. N.—Chicago Tribune.

Considerate. "Have you ever done anything to make the world happier?" asked the woman looking person with the unbuttoned hair.

"Yes," answered the jolly man with the buttoned hair.

"What?"

"I've never done anything to make the world happier."

"Why not?"

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Christmas Week

Munford's Store

From now until Christmas Day hundreds of anxious customers will be looking for attractive styles in Dress Goods, Dry Goods, Shoes, Clothing, Furniture new and suitable Novelties for Xmas Gifts. Our Store is fully stocked with Complete Lines of these goods and many more. Just what you are looking for. Our Prices are just as reasonable as we can make them. We invite you to come and look them over. Get our prices. They are within the reach of all.

Ladies' Fine Jackets
Brand new line just arrived by express for Christmas buyers. All styles and colors. Prices from \$3 to \$18 each.

Ladies' Skirts
Some special values here in Dress and Under Skirts. Many styles to select from can fit you and please you as to quality and price.

Dress Goods
Large line in all shades, grades and kinds, including the newest and most up-to-date patterns to be found.

Bed Blankets and Quilts
Make cold nights comfortable by buying a pair of our Blankets. All wool, and all Cotton, white and colored. Lowest prices.

Cotton Goods
Outings in Pure White, Cream, Light Fancy's and Darks, Calicoes, Percales, Ginghams, all of the lowest prices. Best Colors and Good Styles.

Shoes Shoes
All kinds to select from the heaviest work kind to the finest makes. For Ladies, Men, Youths, Children and Babies.

CLOTHING CLOTHING

When you are in need of Clothing for Men, Youths or Boys give us a call. Our Styles are all right. Our prices are low.

Neckwear
Hundreds of styles and shapes to select from Prices 25 and 50c each. Give us a chance. We can please you.

Underwear
Large lot to close out. Some special values. Bought cheap and can give old prices. See for yourself.

Furniture and Housefurnishing Goods

Before purchasing your Bed Rooms Suits, Chairs, Rugs, Carpets, Matting and any Housefurnishing Goods. See us. Some special vales in large Rugs, Suitable for Christmas Presents.

Don't forget the place

C. T. MUNFORD

Next to Hood's New Drug Store

North Queen Street, KINSTON, N. C.