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\$1.00 THE YEAR IN ADVANCE

THE OUTCAST

BY WALTER H. CANDLER.

It was Christmas eve, the snow was falling steadily in big flakes. A lone man on crutches made his way painfully along the railroad track, stopping occasionally to brush the wet snow from his beard and slouched hat. He was thinking of another Christmas eve one year ago—just such a night. They had carried him to the hospital after the accident. The accident! Yes, he remembered it with startling vividness, but when he tried to think beyond the accident his mind was clouded and things seemed like a vague dream he had had some time or other. There was the doctor at the hospital who had bandaged his fractured leg, and there was the nurse who reminded him so much of his sister—who now appeared to him as a dream child in some fairyland far away—all night long she sat by his bedside soothing away the pain and now and again moistening his parched lips.

And then morning came, Christmas morning! The sunbeams peeped through the window, and he had forgotten the pain, and was just slipping into dreamland, trying to think why he, a tramp, should be treated with such consideration by decent people. The nurse, who had been called away, came to him and placed her hand gently upon his forehead. He remembered the strange expression on her face when he opened his eyes and looked at her.

She told him of a very sad accident that had happened that same Christmas eve. The daughter of a wealthy man had been frightfully burned. There was little chance for her recovery. The doctor had told her if they could get some human skin to replace the charred mass on her back, they might be able to save her, and would he volunteer to give his leg to save her life?

Would he? For a moment there was a fierce struggle in his soul, but only for a moment, then he looked up into the nurse's face; the tears were trickling down her cheeks. He tried to speak, but the words would not come through the dry parched throat and lips; he nodded his head; that was enough. Then came the operating room, the chloroform and oblivion. When consciousness returned the nurse was there—the same nurse so much like his sister. She told him the operation was a success, the young lady would recover, the newspapers were loud in their comment of his wonderful sacrifice and bravery:

"The whole world is talking about you," she said.

Yes, the world talked about him, then forgot him as it forgets things of even greater import. It was good "dope" for the newspaper reporters and the press.

Somehow his mind had not been clear since that accident. He remembered vaguely leaving the hospital. They gave him a pair of crutches, that was all; but was not that enough? What more could he, a common tramp, ask for or expect?

As he picked his way along the railroad track slowly and uncertainly, he tried to get the cobwebs from his brain. Four long weary days had passed since he had tasted food. Had he asked? Yes;

but each time he met with the same cold, inhuman stare and the same curt refusal. But what right did he have to ask for a scrap of bread? Was he not a tramp, an outcast? What human heart could be compassionate toward him or feel a kindred spirit? Was it not his lot to starve, to freeze? What difference could it make? Would the world not be better off without him?

On and on he stumbled through the darkness, fearful to stop lest that horrible stupor which he had been fighting off so long, take possession of him. His hunger was not so fierce now as it had been. Why was it? Was he growing accustomed to going without food?

A big house loomed up in the darkness not far from the track; bright lights were flooding every window. He made his way toward the house. Would he ever reach it? The lights seemed to grow further and further and away as he approached. The sound of merry voices reached his ears. He felt that queer sensation creeping up his spine. He stopped to knock the snow from his face and to feel the stump of his leg which had grown numb; he was feeling queer, yet there was no pain. What was it, was he starving, or freezing, to death?

There! he could see through one of the big windows. What was that he saw? At first his eyes seemed to have failed him, then his vision gradually cleared, and there before him in the big warm, comfortable room was a beautiful Christmas tree laden with oranges, fire crackers, dolls, candy in sacks, toy pistols, pocket knives, tops and many other things dear to a child.

He could see the children as they fitted gleefully here and there full of childish expectancy. From an adjoining room came the father and mother and a gray haired man with a tall beautiful young lady. Was he a minister? Yes, they were kneeling in prayer. The words came slow and measured and pathetic:

"We are thankful dear Father that we are privileged to enjoy all these blessings."

The man at the window listened with bowed head. He tried to raise his hand to brush the snow from his face, but it would not let go its grasp on the crutch. He tried the other hand, it too, was fastened. He raised his head with difficulty and looked into the room, the prayer was finished, a look of happiness beamed in each little expectant face. The many presents were being distributed, he could hear the snap of toy pistols and the hoarse unmusical sound of the little red and gilded bugles, then a white cloud descended slowly cutting off his view of the room, it was his breath freezing on the window pane.

A fireside scene of long, long ago appeared to him on the white sheen. A little boy and girl were hanging up their stockings by the old fashioned fire place. He could see their glad faces as they knelt at mother's knee and from across the years drifted the echo of "Now I lay me down to sleep." Then they arose and kissed mother good night and jumped into their little trundle bed.

Ah, the sweet and tender memories of childhood days! How they follow us on and on down through the aisles of time! We hear the song and laughter of our loved ones

of long ago, we feel the touch of a hand in gentle caress, or the warmth of a kiss.

The man at the window was listening with rapt attention, not to the childish voices inside the room, but to the voices of long ago, and as he listened, the tears rolled down his cheeks and froze on his rough unkempt beard. There was no bitterness in his heart, not even for those goodly housewives who had refused him food these four days. He had never harmed any one in all his life. He realized as he stood there that his whole life had been a mistake, that he had started off wrong in the first place, yet he blamed no one for his mistake. He had given his limb to save a life, he would have given more if necessary, but that was all they asked for—and yet, when he had asked for a scrap of bread to save his own life, they had refused him. Was this the plan. Were things so ordered in the beginning of the world that soul upon soul should be whirled in fierce attrition in infinite turmoil? Was this the vision ultimate?

The queer sensation he had at first felt creeping up his spine now enveloped his entire being. He tried to move closer to the window which seemed to be slipping slowly away, but he could not move; the voices of the children were now almost inaudible; in the distance he could hear bells ringing. Perhaps they were Christmas bells! now they were coming closer and from every direction, hundreds and thousands of them of all sizes and tones. There before him was a large warm dining room, the table was spread with white linen—did linen ever seem whiter? Ah, yes the feast was spread, there was every thing good to eat and tempting. There was his sister entering the diningroom smiling and beckoning to him, to come to her.

"We are glad to have you with us tonight," said Mrs. Morton, addressing herself to the white haired minister.

"We are, indeed," affirmed Mr. Morton. "I was just thinking how different it was with us a year ago tonight."

"Don't talk of it, Samuel," protested Mrs. Morton with a show of feeling.

"But why shouldn't we talk of it mother?" asked the daughter, "I was thinking of it myself, and have been all evening. Somehow I have a peculiar feeling, and I—"

"Nonsense, daughter—you are nervous, that's all," replied the mother, then turning to her husband "Samuel, I wish you would caution the children to be quiet, their noise is beginning to get on my nerves."

"Please don't mother, said the daughter, "I am sure the children do not worry me. Let them enjoy themselves, Christmas don't come often."

"We never know just what we have to be thankful for," said the kind old minister. "That awful accident a year ago and Blanche's miraculous recovery, is something I have thought of no little."

"It was wonderful," agreed Mr. Morton, "and goes to show what wonderful advances have been made in the science of surgery."

"But father, what could those surgeons have done to have saved

my life if that poor fellow had not given his limb?" asked the daughter.

"Very true my daughter, very true," replied the father. "That poor fellow did a heroic deed. I shall always regret that I failed to see him before he left the hospital."

"But he was just a tramp, and they said his limb had been broken and was useless to him," said the mother in a tone of protest.

There was silence, a spell of gloom descended over all, even the children lost interest in their dolls and other toys and began to yawn. Little Frank wandered over to the window and tried to look out.

"Look mama!" he called, "the window is white in a great big circle, what makes it that way?"

"Come here to the fire son," cautioned the mother, you will take cold over there."

"But, mama! what makes the window white like that?" the child insisted.

"Come over here by the fire, son," said the father "it is frost on the window pane that makes it white. It is turning colder. No doubt many a poor unfortunate is suffering tonight. It reminds me of the same night a year ago. What is it, Blanche, daughter—why are you crying? Perhaps you should retire, I am afraid you are not well."

"Don't, father, I am perfectly well—I was just thinking, that's all."

"Listen!" exclaimed the father, springing up from his chair, "I heard something fall outside the window."

"I heard it too," said the mother.

"I wonder if those neighbor boys are up to some of their pranks again," continued the father. "I'll take a light and go investigate."

"I think you will find it was just some snow fell off the roof," said the minister.

"But surely snow falling would not make a noise like that," replied Mr. Morton.

"It sounded to me just like frozen snow falling from the roof," continued the minister.

"Perhaps you are right Parson, I didn't think of that—no doubt you are right.—Look! Blanche are you crying yet? What is it daughter?" and her father arose and went to her side.

"I don't know, father but I have had a peculiar feeling ever since I came into the room, and that noise outside the window—awhile ago must have made me unusually nervous, I seemed to have felt something break down in my heart. I think I shall retire if I may be excused."

Christmas morning dawned, bright, clear and cold. The snow which had ceased to fall during the night was frozen solid. The Mortons were astir before daylight, the children were out shooting their fireworks and eating nuts and candy. It was a typical Christmas morning, everything confusion, expectancy, excitement and delight.

A water pipe had frozen, Mr. Morton took a wrench and went to look for the exposed part, in passing around the house, he stumbles over a form half buried in the frozen snow. What was it he stooped to make examination, then fell back with a look of horror. It was a dead man! Upon closer examination he discovered that the man was a tramp—a one legged tramp.

One of his crutches was under his arm, the had caught in a rose bush. The man was frozen. There were icicles on his rough beard and a smile on his face that seemed to hover around the cold glassy eyes which stared out into space.

BETA GRADED SCHOOL

The Beta Graded School resumed its work Monday with the usual large attendance. The children seem extremely anxious to take up the school work again, Hard study and bad weather do not debar interest. We have a great number of "Wide-awake" pupils at Beta. They are note-worthy and trust-worthy young people, for which we feel especially thankful.

The generosity and efficient leadership of Prof. Moore and Miss Rigdon cannot be over estimated. We should strive to employ teachers with noble characters, seeing the results from such examples.

Wishes to all for a happy and prosperous new year. A READER.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

Vola Vita Manufacturing Co. has just received its charter from Oklahoma City.

The company is capitalized for \$100,000, with the following officers: A. J. Campbell of Muskogee, president and treasurer; W. H. Candler, Muskogee vice president; C. M. Raisig, Muskogee, secretary. The company has placed \$50,000 of its treasury stock with capitalists of Chicago and New York.

The main office will be in Chicago, and soon as the office is opened A. J. Campbell will resign as president in favor of W. E. Weatherby of Chicago. The company will manufacture many toilet articles in addition to the Vola Vita Hair Tonic.

W. H. Candler will look after the manufacturing, and C. M. Raisig, the selling, and A. J. Campbell, the financial part of the business.

The company will also have an office in Muskogee, Okla.

GROUND LIMESTONE

The Commissioner of Agriculture, Raleigh, N. C., is in position to furnish the farmers of the state with high grade ground limestone and marl at cost of production; and he will have no difficulty in making prompt delivery provided the orders come in early.

There is sure to be a rush for this material in February and March and many will be forced to do without it whose orders are delayed till this time. It is of extreme importance, therefore, that orders be sent in at once for future delivery.

The Commissioner has state contracts, at very low prices, with all the best lime gridding plants that are so located that they can do business in this state, and it will be greatly to the farmers advantage to get his material through the Commissioner. Let us have your orders at once and we will fill them as soon as possible. We will quote prices and freight rates on request.

Jas. L. Burgess,
State Agronomist.

FOLEY KIDNEY PILLS

FOR BACKACHE, HEADACHE AND BLINDNESS