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## A Strange Christmas Gift

They were chums at college, Walter Reed and David Dudley. They were in their second or sophomore year. They had never known each other until they had met at this school. Then some subtle attraction, not visible to other persons, had drawn them together. For they were about as unlike as two young men could be.

Walter Reed was a farmer's son, twenty-one years old, who had had close acquaintance with poverty all his life and who had done hard labor since he was able to plow a furrow or hoe a row of corn. Tall, massive, ungainly, and almost homely, he seemed somewhat out of place in an institution of higher learning. He looked as if he was more suited to the work of managing a reaper or of directing a threshing crew than to the task of investigating Greek roots or of tracing the charms of classical belle-lettres. "Vulcan" was his sick-name, from the very second day of his course.

Walter had been thrown on his own resources early in his boyhood. His parents, whose only child he was, had died before he was nine. Thenceforward he had earned his own living. He had first done the chores on a farm for his keep. Later on, he made what bargain he could for his services.

Walter had been to school, all told only seven months, when he became an orphan. After that he did not have a day for study until he was over fourteen. Then a robust, awkward, overgrown lad, he had attended the closing exercises of the high school at the county seat. That fired his imagination. Next he was present at an enthusiastic political meeting at which a young lawyer delivered a rousing speech. To Walter it seemed the eloquence of Demosthenes. Shortly afterwards he happened to come across the lives of Abraham Lincoln and of Archbishop Hughes, of New York. They shaped his life.

From the day that the boy read those books he had a masterful passion—he would get an education. If they out of poverty and ignorance could raise themselves to knowledge and position, he could and would, likewise. He would amount to something. He would be of use in the world. He would make the most of himself. He would do something worth while.

From that time forward, studying during his free time in the day, studying at night, studying on Sunday, studying on holidays, studying in the summer vacation, the lad went on doggedly. He got the help of the children of the farmer for whom he then toiled, he got the help of the teacher, he got the help of the young lawyer whose speech had stirred his ambition. He got the help of the priest. He changed masters, so as to get to town and he made an agreement with his new employers that he could go to school in the morning and work the rest of the day. He learned faster than the pupils who attended both sessions. Slow and laborious were his studies, but determination and persistence helped him to succeed.

At sixteen he started out for himself as a cattle buyer, in a small way, making petty gains but often taking infinite trouble to get stock and to find a profitable market.

He turned his hand to other things and in all of them he made some money. His industry was indefatigable. He had no time to read novels, no time for news of base ball games all over the country, no time for saloons, no time for cards and idle companions. He was haunted by his desire for an education. Every circumstance around him that could be made to contribute to that purpose, was put to his use.

At seventeen, Walter was able to squeeze through the examination for the high school and in two years he finished the course. His sturdy constitution enabled him to stand the strain. His teachers, interested by his con-

suming desire for education, did their best to push him along. He was phenomenally diligent.

Even while pursuing his studies, he kept up his stock business, which now extended, more or less, over five counties, wherever cattle were for sale by farmers, who did not have enough of them to make up a car load and who had no experience in dealing with the packing houses. He saved every possible cent as he went along, and when his diploma was won, he sold out his business, as a going concern, with a "good-will," a horse and buggy, and a lot of two acres near town, with a ramshackle stable that he had built himself, for \$2,000. Besides it, he had \$1,200. Then he set off for college.

"That amount must provide for everything," he said to himself, "for the next four years."

David Dudley was the eldest son of a doctor, who was the son of a doctor and who came of a family many of whose scions had entered the professions. He was of the Brahma-caste of this country.

David was eighteen, of medium stature, graceful, good-looking. His intellect was bright. He dressed neatly and with good taste. His manners were refined. He was sympathetic, courteous, sweet-tempered like his mother, cherry and fond of fun. He made friends easily. He was sociable and had many doors open to him. David was inclined to be easy-going, if not indolent, accustomed as he was to comfort and persuaded that his superior endowments would be certain to carry him to success.

There was something effeminate about him, too, that made most people on short acquaintance misjudge him and think him a mollycoddle. What it was, it would be hard to say. He took after his mother in looks and had eyes like hers, beautiful, large, brown, velvety, glistening. His ways, too, were gentle. His hands were small. But when he was roused, when there was a temptation to any baseness, there was a glint in his eyes, a drawing in of the lips, a tightening of the slender fingers into shut fist, that showed strength of character, grit, honor, manliness in plenty.

It was David's purpose to follow in the footsteps of his father. He was anxious to make progress in his college course, for there was at home a large family of younger brothers and sisters, and little provision for them except the current income of the father. Dr. Dudley came of a fine family, but he was of a branch that was not rich. He himself was a better physician than he was a bill-collector. He loved his calling and made it yield him sufficient for him and his to live in frugal comfort. Besides, there was David coming on, to be a prop to the family, and on him the father built high hopes. The rest he left to Divine Providence. "God will take care of His own," he said often, "let us take care to serve Him."

Walter and David entered college the same day, but they did not become well acquainted until seven weeks later. Then an accident brought them together. A team of horses ran away, dragging a farm wagon in which were three little children. Their parents had gone into a store. Something frightened the animals and off they set at a crazy gallop. They went pushing down the street. David saw them. He was a quarter of a square away and made direct an instant choice to risk his life. To try to stop by main strength that heavy team in their mad flight would have been folly. David rushed out into the road and put himself in position to catch the rear of the wagon. He had a hard run for it. He clambered over the back, across the body, up-over the seat, down on the snapping tongue, gripping the harness over the horses back to keep himself from falling, and then watching his chance to grasp the reins, which had fallen to the ground. As soon as he had the lines, David made his way back into the wagon, and then he saw at the horses' mouths to let them know that they were

again under the law of bondage, and next he exerted himself to the utmost to guide them until they should run themselves out or yield to his authority. It was not long before he had them in subjection. Then he turned them around and drove them back to the place from which they had started.

Walter had seen this exhibition of courage, wit and skill. It had appealed to him in all three ways. He rushed up to David and exclaimed cordially:

"Well done, Mr. Dudley. Let me shake hands with you, sir. That was a gallant deed."

David took the proffered hand, but said:

"Don't mention it. I didn't care so much about the horses, although I hate to see dumb beasts hurt. But I couldn't bear to let those three children be injured. Something within me prompted me to make the effort for their rescue. I'm glad they came to no harm."

Just then the farmer bustled up and David had to listen to a flood of gratitude.

After that day, Walter and David became friendly toward each other. Walter admired David's mental alertness. David wondered at Walter's dogged persistence in his plan to get an education and to do something in the world worth while. Their mutual admiration deepened into mutual affection.

It was strange to see the two friends together—the one, tall, ravened, coarse-grained, heavy awkward, slow; the other medium-sized, delicate, light, graceful, quick.

The first year at college went by without event. At the end of it David was fifth in his class and Walter was thirty-second. David was disappointed—he had hoped to be second or at least third. But Walter was more than satisfied.

"I've had such a short course," he said, and had such a poor foundation to start with that I'd have been satisfied to merely pull through. That I'm not last is very gratifying. It gives me ground to hope that I'll win out."

The second year opened auspiciously. All but two of the successful students had returned to college, and a fine class was expected to be the result. Walter and David were promptly in their places.

September passed, October passed, November passed. On December 8, there was a telegram for David—his father had been stricken with diphtheria, and was very low.

David accompanied by Walter to the station, made haste to catch the next train.

On December 15 a letter from David was received at the college. His father had died the day after his return. The family now depended on him not exactly for the necessary things of life, but for everything beyond them. There was the home, \$3000 life insurance, and some income from investment that amounted to about \$60 a month. The \$3000 if put into two small houses could be made to yield about \$25 a month, net. David would have to look for employment. It was a bitter sacrifice, he admitted, to give up his hope of becoming a doctor, but this was simply out of the question, and he accepted the inevitable. In the midst of the darkness, he said, he looked up towards the sky and tried to say: "Thy will be done." He let his decision about it go over until after the holy communion the next day. But they couldn't help some rays of cheerfulness from brightening up their spirits, nor some notes of hope singing in their hearts.

On Christmas day, mother and son decided that David should not accept his friend's great offer. It was too great a kindness, too heavy an obligation. It could not be. So David wrote to the president of the college, to the old pastor of Walter, and to every one else he could think of who would be likely to know the whereabouts of the missing student. But his inquiries were in vain. Moreover, when it was clear



Madonna and Child

minutes. His face grew pale. He trembled a little. Then slowly and as if in pain, he opened his eyes, picked up the papers again, and completed the reading of his friend's communication.

Then for one whole week raged a storm in the soul of Walter Reed. It gave him no peace by night or by day. At the end of it he wrote this letter.

"Dear David: While I was reading your letter an inspiration came to me—to drop out of college and to let you finish your course. I've had a battle with myself over it, but it's come out on top. It's the proper thing. I've made no one dependent on me and I could do do nothing much without college education. I might become a third-rate lawyer, but I have no hankering for that pursuit. In fact I have no speciality in view. So, in a way, it would be a waste of good material to educate me any further. But you have a vocation to be a doctor, you have exceptional ability, and your people need you. They can hold out until you graduate from a medical school and get back his practice. Inclosed is a check for the money I had put by for my own course. With rigid economy it will put you through. You may not like to accept it, but you'll have to do so. I leave here tomorrow for good, and no one knows my address. When you've been a doctor for ten years or so, if your well and prosperous, help some poor boy to get an education for my sake. Goodby. Be sure that I love you. Don't look for me. Go back to college right after the holidays. Goodby again, and for the last time in this world, and good luck!"

Yours faithfully,  
Walter Reed

That letter reached David on Christmas eve. It overwhelmed him with conflicting emotions. It made his mother slightly hysterical—now with joy because her son could become a doctor, now with sorrow that Walter should make such a sacrifice. They let their decision about it go over until after the holy communion the next day. But they couldn't help some rays of cheerfulness from brightening up their spirits, nor some notes of hope singing in their hearts.

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## News From Ireland

Much regret is felt in Ennis, Co. Mayo, at the death of Thomas Patrick Connolly, eldest son of the late Alex. Connolly, Milltown House. The deceased was well known as an athlete and took prominent part in football and cycling meetings.

At a meeting of the committee of Management of the Wexford County Infirmary, Miss Catherine Johnson, Baginbally, was elected nurse, the voting being for Miss Johnson, 6, and for Miss Grace Mallow, 3.

Recently, Patrick Regan, Kinlough, and recently, Wm. McVitty, Cahel, died.

His Grace the Archbishop has made the following appointments: The Very Rev. Canon Baxter, E. Cladalkin, to be Vicar, P. J. O'Connell, Rathfriland, to be parish priest of Celbridge.

November 8, Mrs. Mary Graydon, Roslea, and recently, A. G. Wier, Drogheda, died.

Exciting scenes took place in an eviction at Bugres during the night, by order of the court of Bankruptcy of a shop named John Shanahan and his family.

Damage to the extent of nearly \$4,000 was done by a fire in the saw mill of Messrs. R. M. Cowan & Sons, Tralee, on Monday night, Nov. 14th.

Rev. Edw. Dunne, of the church of Our Lady of Mercy, Rathfriland, Dublin, has appointed pastor of "Carrick" parish.

The Catholicism rural society has adopted a resolution concerning the Protestant Bishops, Bernard and Dr. D. A. O'Connell, one atom of the part of the Catholicism rural society, Kilkenney and to have them to withdraw their recent statement as they had uttered them.

By the demise on Saturday, Nov. 4, of Mrs. Ellen Breen, one of the very oldest and most respected inhabitants of Meath, passed away.

The result of the laborer's inquiry, held at Newry, West, over a year ago, has just been made known. It states that 117 cottages and 21 allotments have been passed.

On Nov. 2nd, at the Courthouse, Westport, H. G. Black, auctioneer, disposed of the tenant's interest in a holding of land at Kilmeena to John Joyce for \$500 and auctioneer's fees. The first term judicial rent is \$11 and the Poor Law Valuation \$12.

During a violent windstorm on Saturday night, Nov. 4, three laborer's cottages at Cruisestown, which had not been finished by the contractor, were knocked to the ground. They had been built in excellent brickwork, but the roofs were not on.

The death took place on Nov. 7, of Mrs. Kilgallen, Ardara, aged 52 years.

Carrick-on-Suir Guardians have granted a pension of £52 per year to Mrs. Crammins, late matron in the Union.

The tender of Patrick Bernis builder, Ferns, has been accepted for the erection of the new Roman Catholic church at Ballycanew at the sum of £730.

Emmet Cooney. You are cordially invited to attend a New Year's complimentary dance on Tuesday evening, January 2nd, 1912, at A. O. H. Hall, 156 West Main St.

The Sisters of the Holy Ghost have opened two schools for colored children in Mobile, Ala.