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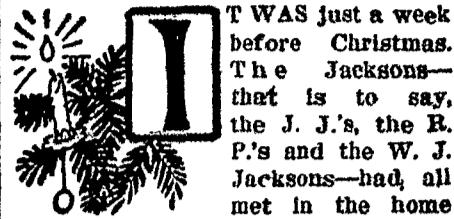
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**UNCLE JIM'S
CHRISTMAS**

By MARION E. REAGAN



IT WAS just a week before Christmas. The Jacksons—that is to say, the J. J.'s, the R. P.'s and the W. J. Jacksons—had all met in the home of the latter to discuss what was referred to as their "predicament." The oldest son of the W. J. Jacksons had just gone into business some few months before and his father, and his two uncles, J. J. and R. P., had endorsed his note. In the meantime the business had failed and the Jacksons were now called on to make the note good. To pay, as they certainly would have to, meant to sacrifice what little they had, and none of them was any too prosperous.

"How about asking Uncle Jim for the money?" R. P. suggested. "He's rich enough and it wouldn't hurt him." "Yes," interrupted his wife, "but you forget he's just as tight as he's rich, and there isn't one of us that's even laid eyes on him since Cousin William's death four years ago."

"That's all right," replied her husband, "people get generous impulses at Christmas time, and you never get anything in this world unless you ask for it."

Everyone agreed that what R. P. said was true enough, but none would stoop to ask a favor of him. It wouldn't do, that was all. It wouldn't do.

However, after the little meeting broke up and the families went on their various ways, each had the idea that after all it wouldn't hurt to try Uncle Jim. They would say nothing to the rest and if it did not turn out well, no one would ever know.

And so that night three letters were sent to Uncle Jim—one from R. P., one from W. J., and one from J. J. Jackson, asking for \$5,000 to pay off the note of the young Jackson, and thus save three families from utter ruin.

Uncle Jim, an irate, extremely close old bachelor, was furious the morning of December 23. He paced the floor, his face crimson, three letters crumpled in his fist. "By George, what nerve! The begging beasts!" he exploded. He sat down to write a



"And One From J. J. Jackson Asking for \$5,000."

terse note to each saying "No." definitely, but found it a little difficult—even he—to be so cold. Finally he thought the easiest way to get out of it gracefully would be to write saying that he himself had had reverses and was poorer than any one of them. To make it a little more graphic, he even referred to his "cold garret."

Mrs. J. J. Jackson appeared at the breakfast table next morning with a letter in her hand.

"From Uncle Jim," she answered simply to her husband's inquiry.

"Nothing doing, I suppose?" he asked.

"Oh, it's much worse than that, Jack; the poor old man—read this. Isn't it too bad, after all he's had?"

"Let's invite him here for Christmas dinner," suggested Mrs. J. J. "It's pretty hard on him, you know, being alone and old like that."

It was agreed. Mrs. J. J. sat down and wrote the following:

"Dear Uncle Jim:
"We are so sorry to have bothered you with our note, but we never knew of your reverses. Won't you come and spend the Christmas holidays with us? The enclosed is a postal order for \$2.50 to cover the fare. Do come. We are most anxious to see you.
"Your affectionate niece,
"ANN."

The peculiar thing was that precisely the same thing happened in the home of the R. P.'s and W. J.'s, with the result that Uncle Jim again received three letters from his nieces, all enclosing the fare to Evansville for Christmas dinner.

Old Uncle Jim was genuinely touched. Of all the things that might have happened, certainly this was the last he would have expected.

That night, Christmas Eve, the Jacksons met again at the J. J.'s to discuss what could be done about the note, which had to be met on the 26th. They had not gotten far with their plans when the noise of a high-powered motor was heard outside and the bell rang.

"Gracious, Uncle Jim!" exclaimed Mrs. J. J., when she opened the door.

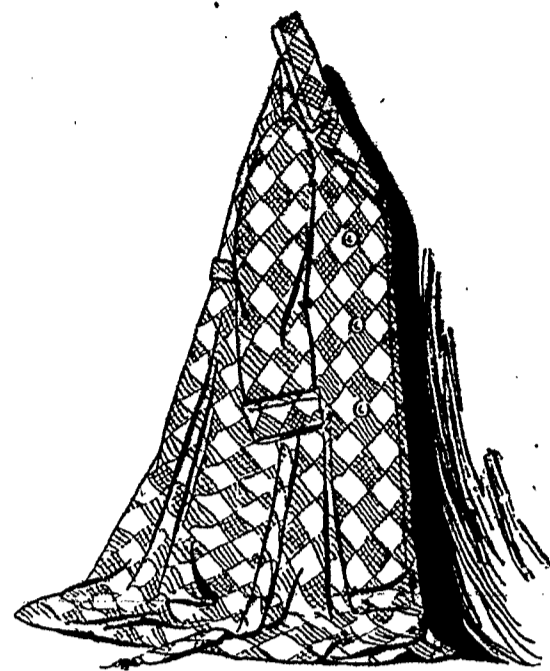
"Of course, Uncle Jim," said the old man. "I was only teasing you when I wrote that letter. I had intended coming all along and paying off the little note. Here take these—just a few Christmas greetings for each of you."

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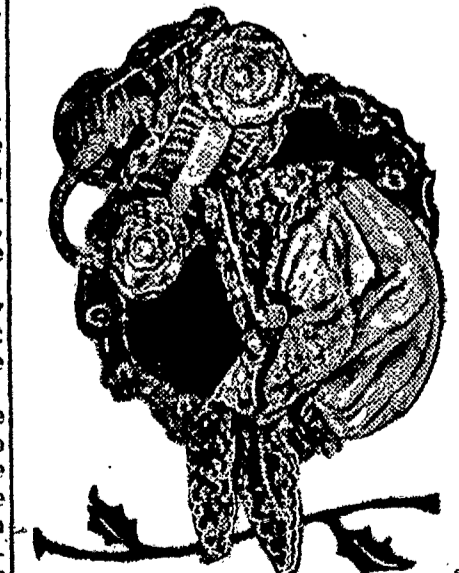
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Among Favorite Gifts



Painted metal shoe trees are among the old favorites in gifts that appear in new guise this year. On a black pair grotesque faces promise smiling and faithful service to a master, and on a blue pair pretty pink blossoms bespeak a mistress' approval.

Gay Bits of Headwear



Always welcome breakfast caps are not to be left out of the lists of Christmas gifts, even though bobbed heads are easy to keep tidy. Caps for the long-haired and bands for the "bobs" are still made of laces, ribbons, silks and flowers. Two new models, that will contribute cheerfulness to the breakfast table, are shown here.

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