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JOHN BARTLEY
THE FURNITURE MAN of Kent County
CHESTERTOWN, MARYLAND.

Mr. Arfur's Christmas Gift

By INA WRIGHT HANSON

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HENRIETTA, on the rug by the fireplace, was absorbed in her occupation, which was putting off all of Ariminta Eudella's articles of wearing apparel and putting them on again. When the last tiny garment had been adjusted to her satisfaction she found time to look at Mr. Arfur, who sat by the window, a picture of doldrums. With a regretful glance at Evangeline Bell, who was yet to be attended to, the small mother arose and went over to Mr. Arfur. Resting one hand on his knee, she gazed anxiously into his face.

The young man roused himself and smiled down at the squarely cut locks, the great brown eyes and dimples.

"Have you been bad, Mr. Arfur?" she inquired solicitously.

"I don't think I have been so bad as—the—bad man, Henrietta," he answered, squeezing her small hand.

"I've been good as an angel," she remarked modestly, "so Santa Claus is going to 'bwing me anuver dolly in a tooing cah."

"In a what, Henrietta?"

"A tooing cah," she repeated; then, as Arthur failed to grasp her meaning, she exemplified patiently, "like Sister Wose's what she takes you widing in."

"Oh, I see! A touring car, you aristocratic baby. No more doll wagons and go-carts for you, eh?" he chuckled, then grew gloomy again.

"What do you want foh Kwismas?"

"Something I am afraid I can never have in all this wide world, Henrietta." He drew a long breath.

"If you are good, Santa Claus"—

"It's entirely out of the old fellow's jurisdiction, my pet."

The child gazed at him curiously.

"It's a heart of fine gold that I want, Henrietta, and only one person can give it to me, and if she won't, girlie"—

"Is she a faiwy?" Henrietta's tone was reverential, her eyes full of excitement.

"The queen of them all."

"And has a crown on?"

"Yes, a crown of her own golden hair, and her eyes are like brown velvet pansies, and she has the sweetest



"LISTEN!" HE WHISPERED.

red lips, Henrietta. But yesterday I met her, and she hurried by, scarcely speaking, and this morning on the street she pretended not to see me, though I know she did, and all because—you wouldn't have believed such a queen of a girl would care so much because she didn't get the prize at the masquerade, would you, now?"

"My!" ejaculated Henrietta. But her next eager question was cut short by Mr. Arfur's springing to his feet. "Sister Wose" had entered the room, and Henrietta, knowing from much experience that she was decidedly de trop when they two were together, went reluctantly back to Evangeline Bell and the fireplace.

"Good morning," said Sister Rose, her tone suggestive of a glare of ice and a flurry of snow. "I have an engagement." But she sat down.

"Oh, I am sorry. Then I will go," he said gently, but he also sat down.

In his eyes, honest and gray, was a complexity of expressions as he watched her trying desperately to appear very much at her ease. Love looked from his eyes—there was no doubt of that—and admiration and approval, and yet a growing wonder that, after all, his idol could be so human.

"I am sorry that you are angry," he began when the silence was getting tense. "Try to realize my position, Rose. I sat there, an unwilling judge—my duty awarding prizes to the best sustained characters in the masquerade. Among the maskers was one to whom my heart went out—a slender little figure whose white satin gown, caught loosely around the waist with a silken girdle, fell in straight folds to her tiny feet. Crowning her small head were chrysanthemums, maroon and gold, and a line of the royal flowers reached from one sweet, bare shoulder to the hem of her gown. The chrysanthemum girl was the loveliest sight in the room, but she was not the best sustained character, so"—

"I hope you don't think I care because you awarded the prize to Grace Hereford," interposed the girl scornfully, "and please don't for a minute think I am angry at anything. I am only disappointed in you." Her voice quivered a little.

"I have suspected the chrysanthemum girl of having moods," Arthur observed, looking at her reflectively. "A fellow I know has different names for her—Moonlight, White Rose, Laughing Water, Gentleness, Beauty, Wisdom. The fellow has admired her when she was gay and when she was serious, but never before has he seen her when she was unreasonable."

The chrysanthemum girl sniffed.

"Will you kindly explain?" added Arthur.

"I had always been so proud of your strength of character," she began. "The first time I ever saw you was in a trolley car. You sat opposite me, and when the car turned the sun shone into your eyes. There was plenty of room on my side, where the sun wouldn't have annoyed you, but instead of changing your seat you got up and pulled down the curtain. I thought to myself, 'There is a man who will be master of circumstances, no matter what they are,' and"—

Rose stopped in confusion as she remembered other things she had thought about this finely formed, handsome young man.

"Go on," he said, leaning forward with great interest. "What else did you think?"

"And now to find out that you are nothing but a chameleon after all," she wailed.

"A what?" Arthur exclaimed in amazement.

"A chameleon," she repeated tearfully. "If you are on a brown leaf you're brown; if on a green tree then you're green."

"Well, green I acknowledge I am, for bless me if I can see what you are driving at."

"The other day when auntie was talking about the sin of wasting your time in dancing you said that you agreed with her that when there was work to do folks ought to do it. You said you were not going to the masquerade for that very reason."

"Well, I didn't intend"—

"You said you had several hours' work at the office that night. Then Grace Hereford came along and asked you to go, and you went!"

There was a flicker of amusement on Arthur's face which Rose did not see, being too busy winking back unwelcome tears.

"Miss Hereford had nothing to do with it, Rose," he said gently. "I went to work, as I said. About 9 o'clock Mr. Jones, the president, came in and said that if I could find Hasson and get his signature to a certain paper and get back by 11 o'clock he would make it worth my while. I had an idea that Hasson was managing that masquerade, and that's where I found him. He buttonholed me at once to be judge of the concern and wouldn't sign the paper unless I agreed. I saw I could get back by 11, so I stayed."

"And had plenty of time to dance with Miss Hereford," supplemented Rose sweetly, but unjudicially.

This time Arthur's smile was certain. "I looked for the chrysanthemum girl first and couldn't find her," he said truthfully. "I danced only once. But what made you think Miss Hereford asked me to go?"

"She said she would wager she could get you to go and that you would dance with her first, so I went to see if—I didn't think you would when you said you wouldn't, but"—

"I see," said the young man quietly. An inborn loyalty to womankind kept him from telling Rose that just as he had started away Miss Hereford had run to him, exclaiming that as he was so kind to award her the prize she certainly must reward him with the first dance, etc. With a sudden impulse he took Rose's little hand in his.

She sprang up and started for the fireplace, but he held her gently back. "Listen," he whispered.

On the glowing coals smoked Evangeline Bell, and on the rug, with eyes turned to the ceiling, knelt Henrietta.

"O God," she was saying, "now I lay me down to sleep. I give my precious dolly, so you will make the faiwy queen wiv the cwown of her golden hair to bwing Mr. Arfur the little heaht he wants for Kwismas. That's all, God, only please let me see her when she comes. Amen."

"Amen!" echoed Arthur fervently.

"Grace Hereford has black hair," observed Rose inconsequently.

"She may have green hair for all it matters to me," said Arthur, with impoliteness. "Rose, darling"—

"I wonder if God will," Henrietta was murmuring, with sad eyes fixed on the mound of ashes which was once Evangeline Bell.

Rose went over to the fireplace and kissed her small sister. "I think God will," she said reverently; then she went back to radiant Mr. Arfur.

SEED TIME

The experienced farmer has learned that some grains require far different soil than others; some crops need different handling than others. He knows that a great deal depends upon right planting at the right time, and that the soil must be kept enriched. No use of complaining in summer about a mistake made in the spring. Decide before the seed is planted.

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Kind Old Man.

Ascum—What did that rich old uncle of yours give you for Christmas? Something useful, I'll bet.

Hauskeep—Yes, a little device for saving coal bills.

Ascum—Ah, an arrangement to attach to the heater?

Hauskeep—No, to keep on my desk. It's a bill file.

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1 15c Package Force..... 10c
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1 lb of Keystone Sweet Tobacco..... 20c
1 lb of Toothpick Chewing Tobacco..... 25c
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