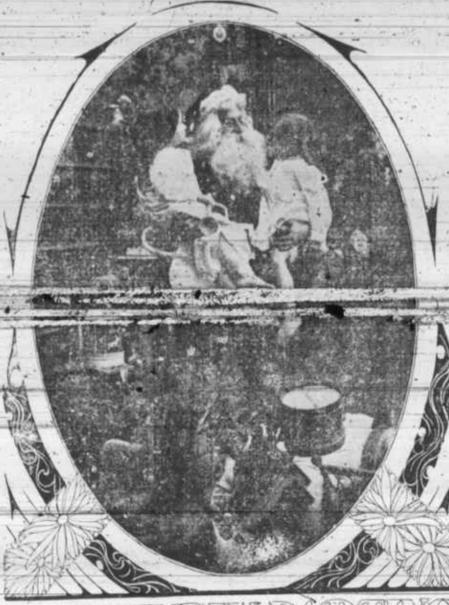


# Eagle Lake Headlight.

Bruce W. McCarty Editor and Prop. "NOTHING EXTENUATE, NOR SET DOWN ABOUT IN MALICE" One Dollar Per Year, In Advance.  
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A FRIENDLY PARTING

## Extenuating Circumstances

A Christmas Story

By ANDREW D. GRANGE

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"I was an unardonable liberty," said Kitty.

"The temptation," I began.

"I had nothing whatever to do with it," she remarked.

"On the contrary," said I, "it palliates the offense, if it does not altogether excuse it. Let us consider the facts in the case. You were spending Christmas with your aunt, Mrs. Gorton, in the country. One evening as you were passing a dog kennel enclosure, on the way to your room, you met a gentleman."

"He wasn't a gentleman," she interrupted.

"I recalled," I continued, "I certainly thought that your aunt's spouse."

"The worst a true gentleman," she added indignantly, "is he wouldn't have done as he did."

"A true gentleman," she continued, "who takes advantage of the darkness."

"I am endeavoring to do so," said I.

"They do it properly," I answered.

"No," she answered, "He came on behind and—"

"I was quite dark," she added, "and only saw his shirtfront. He was in evening dress, you know."

"But were there no distinguishing features, such as a shirt stud or a monogram?" I asked.

"The year," she responded quickly, "he had a monogram, and I think he was tall, because he had to bend down when—"

"Well," said I, "how many tall men were there in the year who had a monogram and a plain gold shirt stud?"

"Let me see," she mused, "there was Capt. Jack Haddock, Mr. Porter, and your nephew Jack."

"I frowned severely. Jack was an impertinent young rascal, whose presumptuous attentions to Kitty Mainwaring had disgusted me on several occasions."

"Jack," I said, "is quite capable of behaving in such a disgraceful manner."

"Yes," she assented, almost cheerfully, "but I don't think it was Jack. At least," she added with a bright smile, "I want you to be a dear old man, a good, kind-hearted person, and find out for me."

"It shall be done!" I cried, rising both to the occasion and to take my leave.

"I am going to make a promise in all the glow of a generous moment, and another thing to keep it in the cold, practical light of after-reasoning."

"However," I said, "I find that I could in the first place, I wrote to Jack, who was then at Harvard, and without divulging the source of my information, stated briefly what had come to my knowledge, and asked him if he could throw any light on the matter. It was some two or three days before I received his reply, which was characteristically brief and ran—"

"Dearest Uncle—I received your letter containing a vivid description of what you term the 'shameful offense.' Now, I don't mind confessing to you that I am the culprit, because you have been young yourself, once, and know that the path of youth is strewn, etc. Besides, there were extenuating circumstances in this case. Like the decent old son you are, make it right for me with the girl, and forever earn the gratitude of your affectionate nephew, Jack Haddock."

"I don't know that I wouldn't do it, again if I got the chance."

made his way up to the dainty blue and white shrine in which Kitty received her most devoted worshippers. I found her standing by a small table in the center of the room when I entered.

"Ah," she exclaimed, running to meet me, "I am glad you have come!"

"Not more so than I am," I replied, pressing her hand warmly.

"Oh, happy!" she said gaily, "I am just dying to hear the news. Have you discovered anything?"

"I have," said I, taking a seat by the table. "I have discovered everything."

"She clasped her hands delightedly. 'You dear old thing!' she cried, 'I knew you would. Who was it?'"

"It was that misguided nephew of mine," I announced gloomily.

"You would be pleased," she said, "if you could actually wink at me, wouldn't you?"

"Oh!" she remarked, "it was Jack, was it?"

"Yes," said I, "it was Jack. She poured out a cup of tea and passed it to me, keeping her eyes fixed on the tea-cosy the while."

"Then we talked about other matters until it was time for me to go. 'Good-bye,' she said, 'and thank you for taking so much trouble.'"

"It was no trouble," I assured her. "One must do the polite thing, you know, at any cost."

"I can only hope," I continued, "that in time you will be able to forgive my nephew for such an act of gross impertinence."

"Ah, yes!" she answered warmly, "I think—yes, I am really very glad it was Jack."

"Oh!" I ejaculated sharply.

"Rather than one of the others," she concluded hastily.

"I wandered drowsily in a less-frequented part of the avenue trying to think things out. It was now close upon a month since my last tête-à-tête with Kitty, and during that time I had never once been able to catch her alone. Indeed, on most of the occasions when I called she was out, a piece of bad luck I had not hitherto been accustomed to, and when I did find her in, she was either surrounded by friends, or engaged in elaborate sewing operations which necessitated the constant attendance of her maid. Once or twice, too, I caught sight of Major Jack in town, when by the calendar he ought to have been pursuing his studies; and the circumstance coupled with his obvious nervousness, would me filled my mind with a vague foreboding."

"What the deuce does it mean?" I asked myself, as I strolled along with eyes thoughtfully bent upon the ground, regardless alike of passers-by, friends, or engaged in elaborate sewing operations which necessitated the constant attendance of her maid. Once or twice, too, I caught sight of Major Jack in town, when by the calendar he ought to have been pursuing his studies; and the circumstance coupled with his obvious nervousness, would me filled my mind with a vague foreboding."

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"It is," said I, frowning at her levity. "I was feeling in no particularly light mood myself just then."

"She pouted and turned to her companion. 'Don't you think, Jack,' she said, 'you ought to tell your uncle about—about it?'"

"Certainly," responded that young hopeful. "You will, my dear uncle, be delighted to learn that I have just obtained Mrs. Mainwaring's consent to my engagement with Kitty here."

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## The Best Wishes of the Season

To the Solitary, the dwellers apart, by choice or by chance, with heartaches that for one burn dull and for two would glow and sing in all of these.

A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!

To them that are set in Families, where love, bestowed with no thought of its return, passes back and forth abundantly between open arms of all these parties, children, cousins, friends.

A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!

To the Poor and the Rich, envying each the other's freedom from the cares of too little and too much, yet longing year by year that without health and enthusiasm and faith and love, none can be rich, and with them none can be poor—these.

A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!

To the Workers, the vast fortunate majority, in humble places and in high, often baffled and disheartened, questioning if there is not somewhere for them a greater work with a greater reward; yet happy at the task if they will have it any, in seeing the figure they have wrought in the fabric of living, a figure drawn by the great Designer for their weaving and some other's—to all of these.

A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!