

jected and then sent back the catalogue by a messenger with a note saying, "Get me what I have marked."

On the day before Christmas the jeweler sent him a package and with it a bill for \$20. Harry expected a bill for only \$10, so he opened the parcel to find out if possible what was the cause of the extra charge. He then found that, besides the brooch, the jeweler had sent him a bracelet he had admired very much and which he at first thought of ordering. But he didn't order it, and, besides, not being able to afford it, he had no intention of being imposed upon in this way. Taking the jewels with him, he hurried to the dealer and asked him to explain.

"Why, I sent you only what you ordered," protested the jeweler.

"I ordered only the brooch," said Harry.

"Pardon me," said the jeweler. "You sent me word to order what you had marked, and I did. You marked both the brooch and the pin."

"Oh, no; I didn't," replied Harry. "I rubbed out all the marks I made except the one for the brooch."

Instead of pursuing the argument the jeweler went to his desk and brought out the marked catalogue. Sure enough, the two items were marked. He had evidently overlooked the mark before the bracelet when erasing the others.

"But I don't want the bracelet," he said.

"I can't help that," replied the jeweler. "You ordered it, and I simply filled your order."

"But you surely are not going to insist that I take it?"

"There is nothing else left for me to do. The mistake was your own, and I can't be expected to bear the loss. The jewel is a very pretty one, but I could not hope to sell it here within a year, and I must pay the New York house for it."

"Well, I call that a skin game," said Harry, losing his temper. The jeweler promptly lost his temper also, and they indulged in a rather undignified quarrel. Finally Harry paid the bill and exclaimed as he did so:

"If I live in this town 50 years, I'll never buy another thing here."

"Well, I'll not be losing my best customer," replied the jeweler, with a sneer.

When Harry reached his room, he took out the two jewels and looked at them. They were both very pretty and tasteful, but he felt that they were more than he could afford just then.

"Why," he said to himself, "I might as well have added \$30 more to the amount and bought her the engagement ring."

Having the jewels, he decided, of course, that he must give them both to Jean, even though she might think him extravagant in spending so much on them when he was saving up for their home. While thinking the matter over it suddenly occurred to him that he could make things look more reasonable if he sent the brooch as a Christmas present and the bracelet as a birthday gift. That would justify them both. Replacing the jewels in their boxes with appropriate cards, he took them to the postoffice and mailed them so that she would get them the first thing in the morning.

When he went to Jean's home to have his Christmas dinner with her, he found her radiantly happy. The gloom that he was told always oppressed her on Christmas was nowhere in evidence. Her greeting to him was more affectionate than it had ever been before, and he felt that, besides wishing him a merry Christmas, she was doing all in her power to make it so for him. When they were finally left alone in the parlor after dinner, she said she wanted to thank him again for his Christmas present and birthday gift. There is only one way for lovers to express such thanks, and after a furtive glance toward the doors and windows it was so expressed. After the customary pause of happy silence Jean whispered as she hid her face on his bosom:

"I felt sure all along that you would pass the test all right. You are so noble and so generous. I loved you so much that I wanted to tell you all about it, but if I did there would be no test. I know

it was silly, but, I vowed once that I would test all my friends this way, as well as any one who made love to me, and you know it has given me the reputation of being odd."

"But what is the test?" asked Harry in surprise, at the same time rejoicing that he had passed it successfully.

"Can't you guess? No, no; you could never guess, for you are too thoughtful and generous ever to think of doing anything else than what you did."

Harry puffed out his chest and felt good while he waited for her to proceed.

"You see, it is just like this: I was born on Christmas day, and superstitious people say that is what makes me different from every one else, but no one has ever guessed the real reason. All the other children had a birthday as well as Christmas every year, but I had to be satisfied with one day for both. Besides, I usually had to be satisfied with only one present. When I was a child, that used to make me feel cheated, and I brooded over it till I was morbidly sensitive on the point, but as I grew older it occurred to me that it gave me a chance to find out which of my friends were really thoughtful and cared for me very much. They were the ones who remembered my birthday and Christmas, just as you did, and the ones who beat me out of a present I just had very little more to do with. Of course it is not the presents I think so much about, but the thoughtfulness, though when I was younger the presents used to count too."

"And so that was what was at the bottom of all the endings of friendships that have happened with you every Christmas?"

"Yes."

"And was it because Tom Harland did not think to give you a Christmas present and birthday gift that you broke off the engagement with him?"

"Don't let us speak about that creature."

"But I want to speak about him. You have never explained why you broke off



"I VALUE THE THOUGHTFULNESS THAT PROMPTS THEM."

the engagement with him. Surely, if you loved him, you didn't break off just because he was one present short."

"I never loved him."

"But you were engaged to him."

"Yes, but I didn't know then what love means. Even if he had passed my foolish test I would still have parted from him, for I did not know my own mind when I consented to be engaged to him."

"But it was at Christmas you broke off with him. Wasn't that because of the test?"

"Well, yes, it was, but he failed in his requirements in a way that I had not previously dreamed possible. Why, that man actually brought me an engagement ring for Christmas, and it was to serve as an engagement ring, Christmas present and birthday gift all in one. That was beyond anything in the way of true economy that I had ever heard of, and it opened my eyes to the kind of man he was. But you must always remember, dear, that it is not the presents I value, but the thoughtfulness that prompts them."

As Harry recalled his quarrel with the jeweler and his regret that he had not spent \$30 more and got an engagement

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