

## A Good Deed That Was Not Forgotten as Was Shown When the Next Xmas Came Round

By Sarah Bolles,

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Jan. 17, 1867, was an epoch-making anniversary. It was my little Billie's fourth birthday. I had promised to take him to spend the day with his aunty, but the morning broke in a furious snow storm. The wind blew a strong gale from the north, the air was filled with icy snow, egress from the house was impossible. The drift at the front door reached to the roof of the porch.

The head of the house had been suffering from bronchitis and could not go to the city as he had hoped to do. In fact, he was needed at home to help comfort poor little disappointed Billie.

At 9 o'clock Harvey, our man of all work. Came in and reported that he had succeeded in reaching the barn, milking the cow and taking care of the horses; but both horses were suffering from epizootic, which was then epidemic in the town. Fortunately some of the snow had blown away between the house and barn but it still left an enormous drift which he had partly shoveled through and partly tunneled under in order to reach the animals. This home duty done, he us that he would put on his snowshoes and go to the railroad station to lean the news. He found that the train which should have reached the station at 11 o'clock the night before was stalled at the four roads of crossing and had been there since 7 in the evening.

Blocked by swirling snow

He told us that one of the brake men had walked up the track to the station under great difficulties, and reported that most of the passengers had left the train soon after the storm began; but there was still about 20 persons in the stalled train, some of them women and children. What made it harder was that it seemed impossible to give them any relief for more than half the horses in town were sick.

At the time he left the village, a delegation had been sent to secure the only yoke of oxen in town, with which they proposed to haul the snow plow down the side of the track to the unfortunate train. This would prove a difficult task indeed as some of the drifts of snow were 12 feet deep.

Harvey told me if I would pack all the food I could spare, he would take it with a can of milk and go down on his snowshoes and get there when he could. Fortunately I had a boiled ham in the house and plenty of bread which I packed with sugar and coffee, and then wrapped the package in a rubber sheet. This he strapped on his shoulders like a knapsack and started on his hard tramp. It was till 11 o'clock and he had a walk of four miles before him. There was no cessation in the fall of snow all day and the drifting continues.

At 6 o'clock in the afternoon, Harvey returned with his story. He found there were 10 men, four women and three children on the train. They were fairly warm because they had a very good fire with fuel enough to keep it; but he was more than welcome with his little package of food, and he described graphically how the men came rushing up to him with their hands bulging with money to get the food; he fought them off and said, "No, women and children first, and then you shall have all there is. I can't take any money. This is stuff that money wont buy." He told us they had a small tin pail and melted

some snow to get water and boiled some coffee on the stove. There was food enough for each to have a very small portion.

The ox team arrived at about 5 o'clock. There were 10 men on it armed with shovels and a large sled was fastened behind the plow- on it a half-barrel of crackers and some cheese which was all the available food in the store. This, however, served to tide them over, and prepared to make themselves comfortable for the night, the men agreeing to take turns looking after the fire and watching for any possible signals that help was arriving.

Harvey found that when the storm proved to be so violent the conductor had telegraphed back for a relief train and he was just in time for the telegraph wires fell soon after and there was no possible communication with the outside world.

It was a bitter night. The storm beat against the windows. Sleep was impossible, for all our thoughts were with the unfortunate passengers stalled in the snowdrift. All 11 o'clock the next day it stopped snowing. Not long after we could hear welcome whistling of the relief train, but how near it was impossible to tell. However all things have an end and after 28 weary hours of waiting in that snow drift the unfortunate train was moved.

The next Christmas, almost a year later, a letter arrived in my care address to "Harvey, the Good Samaritan." It contained a check for \$50 and these words

"To the brave man who would give services, interest, and sympathy, but who would not have money".

And it was signed "From the Passengers."

This might have happened in the Berkshire Hills or the White Mountains, but in reality it was in the country town within 20 miles of Boston.