

LITERARY

4.



AN UNFORGETTABLE ACCIDENT

by

Lois Crump

"I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!" Thus announced Superintendent Smith at the beginning of the Christmas holidays. Kay glanced at Jane. Both girls were popular seniors, and both were expecting to have a big time during the Christmas holidays. While Kay was the kind of girl everyone admires--kind, polite, Jane was the exact opposite. She believed in having a good time and nothing more.

After school Kay walked home with Betty, one of her many friends. "Betty, what are you planning to do for the next two weeks?" Kay asked.

"Oh, I'm going to Boonesville to visit Kate. What are you planning to do?" replied Betty.

"Well, I'm not sure. I'm not so sure I'll have a chance at many dates with Bill because--well, I'll have a big time under any circumstances."

"You need not try to hide it. I know what Jane's been doing. She doesn't like Bill, but she wants to be sure you don't have a chance to like him either. But never mind. He doesn't care a thing about her. Kay, hope you have a merry Christmas. See you later." And Betty turned the corner, leaving Kay alone with her thoughts.

She was not alone long though, for in front of her appeared a ragged little girl of about six years of age. Her coat showed the wear of years, and her shoes had holes in the toes. She wore neither hat nor stockings, but her meager clothing was spotlessly clean. She started to edge over to the side of the walk in order to be out of Kay's way.

"Little girl," she said kindly, "do you live here?"

"Yes, ma'am, I-I-I do! Down by the-the railroad track," replied the small girl.

"Well," returned Kay, laying down her books and kneeling beside the small stranger, "are you glad Christmas is near?"

"I don't know," said the child as she shivered and tried to draw her coat tighter about her emaciated body.

"Why?" asked Kay astonished.

"Because---cause Santa isn't coming to our house this year," she sobbed.