



Alice B. Palmer

THE heaviest snow storm of the season was in progress, while the wind howled like a pack of hungry wolves. It swept through the forest with a mighty gale, decorating hundreds of Christmas trees with its frosty fingers. Great drifts were piling up, resembling ghostly sentinels, stationed in warning of such a night.

Children! Children! everywhere were listening for the merry jingle of Santa's sleigh bells; clapping their tiny hands and dancing joyously about the glistening Christmas trees amidst the warmth and light of modern homes.

It was a night not fit for any living creature to be out, yet a little girl was lost in the midst of a forest, where she was fighting for every breath. She could easily have been called "Little Red Riding Hood," only instead of the warm coat and bonnet she clutched

at a thin, threadbare shawl, which had been the only protection from the elements she had ever known.

She was only eight years of age and had never seen anyone but her aged father, a hermit of the woodland. Christmas to her was like any other day, for he had never told her of this one, wonderful holiday. In fact, he had left her in ignorance of everything

save the daily existence, for he had a past grievance and had grown silent and morose as the years went on.

On this night, of all others, he had suddenly, without warning, toppled over dead in his armchair. The child, not understanding, had rushed out from the cabin into the forest, not knowing where she was going.

At first there were only a few tiny flakes drifting through the air, but as she ran, they grew heavier and heavier until a blinding blizzard was sweeping down upon her. The wind whistled through the trees with an angry wail which almost snatched the old shawl from her, while the snow weighed down upon her eyelashes, making it almost impossible to see. She had no mittens and her feet were encased in the thinnest of moccasins strapped about her ankles.

In and out of the huge drifts she plunged, sometimes sinking beneath the surface and almost losing her breath. Her toes and fingers were becoming numb and several times she almost lost consciousness, but still she dragged herself along, not knowing what was to become of her.

Before she realized it, darkness was upon her and the mighty sounds of the forest came peeling out through the snow-coated landscape. These were the only Christmas bells she knew, and she listened to them with a shudder.

Suddenly she sank into a deep snow bank and dozed off for a second. Here she began to think of something nice which her father had once told her when she was very young. It had always been the one bright star in her little world. He had told her of her mother, who had gone to live in a beautiful place called heaven. Now she wished with all her heart that she could go there, too; but how could she ever find it? Presently she beheld celestial streets, horses and lights, and felt the warmth of fire. Was heaven to be her "First Christmas"?

It was not! For she awoke with a start and, rubbing her eyes, she looked

about her in all directions. Then she thought she saw a faint light in the distance. Was it the moon peeping out from behind the heavy clouds or was it really a lantern or a candle light from a nearby residence?

Feeling through the snow, now with renewed strength, she trudged on and on, but with sinking hopes as the light flickered on and off in the distance. Then it disappeared entirely and she saw only snow mingled with darkness ahead of her.

Heart sick and weary, she was ready to give up all hope, when suddenly a bright light loomed in the near distance. She not only felt its beckoning assurance but could plainly discern the outlines of a building.

The power that guards the nestling's flight gave her strength to reach it. She tumbled through the gateway, her toes and fingers numb and her eyes almost swollen shut. It seemed as though she could not reach the door and she could not find voice to scream; she sank into unconsciousness.

Within the little house was a happy family. There were a father, mother and two children, a boy and a girl. They were gathered about the glorious Christmas tree. The candles had just been lighted and they were admiring the tree, heavy laden with sparkling ornaments and gifts. The true Christmas spirit was present in this little home.

But it was suddenly interrupted, for at that moment King, the faithful old colt, moved uneasily from his place behind the stove and gave a faint whine. They knew that all was not well. The next moment he was at the door, all excited, demanding to be let out.

Upon opening the door they saw a few feet away the form of a little girl, almost frozen to death. They quickly and gently carried her into the warm living room and placed her upon a couch, just opposite the lovely Christmas tree.

Here they hovered about her, on tiptoe, each one doing his bit to make her comfortable. Father rubbed her little frost-bitten toes and fingers while mother rustled to the kitchen to prepare a hot beverage. The children were very quiet, thoughtful and obedient as they stood gazing in wonderment at this frail little form wrapped in such a shabby old shawl.

After much patience and careful attention she opened her eyes, and they were blue—large, innocent, childish eyes of blue. Her brown hair, damp from the snow, hung like silken seaweeds about her baby features.

At first she just stared blankly ahead of her, seeing nor hearing nothing. Then she screamed: "Oh! Where am I? But I had heaven? Is my mamma here? Then she spied the tree in all its glistening beauty—the first one she had ever beheld—her "First Christmas tree." Then she exclaimed, "This must be heaven for I never saw a forest tree in a house." Then the children of her own age puzzled her. She gazed at them bewildered.

These kindly people scarcely dared speak for fear of frightening her. They remained silent while she gazed about to her heart's content at the wonders which to her undeveloped mind, expressed "heaven."

It was too much for father, and he quietly stole away; while mother found it impossible to repress the scalding tears which persisted in filling her eyes. She wondered who could be so cruel as to keep a child in ignorance of Christmas.

Gradually and very gently they tried to explain it all to her; but she did not seem to understand. It was all too wonderful to be true. She was sure that she had found heaven and persisted in thinking of it as such.

But as the celebration progressed and they were all so kind to her, the children sharing their gifts with her she grew happier and happier. She danced about the room like a little fairy, clapping her hands and making

exclamations of joy and surprise. That night there were three little stockings, instead of two, hanging upon the mantelpiece for Santa Claus. The little girl, tightly clutching her first doll, was tucked cozy in bed with the other children and left to dream of her "First Christmas."

Father and mother declared this to be the best Christmas they had ever had, for they had felt the very truest of Christmas spirit in the pleasure of making some one else happy.

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FARMERS DOUBTFUL ABOUT NEW ORGANIZATION

Raleigh, Dec. 21.—While farmers of North Carolina admit that a state-wide farm organization built by the consolidation of community and county organizations will be greatly beneficial, they are doubtful as to the financial support that will be accorded such an organization.

This is the general opinion of the 125 extension workers who gathered at State college last week for their annual conference and school. The county agents, especially, appeared reluctant to commit the farmers with whom they work to this organization. Some of the agents had the specter of the late lamented tobacco association before them when they reported that they would not want to be personally responsible for the success of the organization in their counties.

This view of the agents was upheld

by the result of a survey made of leading farmers. Replies were received from 823 men who had been questioned by the extension service. Most of these replies indicated a need of the proposed organization and stated that the farmers would join the organization and that it would be supported in their home communities; but there was a rather sharp division when the question of dues and financial support were answered.

In discussing the matter before the agents, Dean I. O. Schaub, in charge of agricultural extension work, stated that the agents could not be permitted under the law to go out and perfect such a proposed organization of farmers. The agents can assist the farmers to do their own organizing and may help to see the movement started, but the actual organization must be done by the farmers themselves.

This question of farm organization was one of the principal matters coming before the county agents in their joint conferences. Much time was devoted to a study of all existing national organizations.

Charles A. Lindbergh on Sunday witnessed two bull fights in Mexico City, in celebration of his non-stop flight of 2,000 miles from Washington to the Mexican capital. Sandwiched in between the fights was a review of more than 100,000 workmen who paraded in the central section of the city to show their affection and admiration for the Lone Eagle.

The Cream of the Tobacco Crop



You, too, will find that LUCKY STRIKES give the greatest pleasure—Mild and Mellow, the finest cigarettes you ever smoked. Made of the choicest tobaccos, properly aged and blended with great skill, and there is an extra process—"IT'S TOASTED"—no harshness, not a bit of bite.

Florence Reed, Favorite Stage Star, writes:

"Night in and night out, for months, one's voice must be in perfect condition on the stage. To safeguard it, yet get the greatest enjoyment, Lucky Strikes are the favorites in the theatre world."



Photo by White Studio, N. Y.

"It's toasted" No Throat Irritation No Cough.

Advertisement for Standard Gasoline featuring a globe and the text: 'The best way to guard against crank case dilution in winter is to use good gasoline. "/>

Advertisement for Watauga Lumber Co. featuring a Christmas tree and the text: 'Were we blessed with the talent of a poet, we could not more sincerely convey our expression of good-will to you, than by saying, "/>

Advertisement for C. S. Stevenson Plumbing featuring a circular logo with 'PLUMBING NEEDS' and the text: 'Modernize your home and make life for your wife as easy as new equipment makes possible. Now is the time to have new and modern plumbing installed, while Fall house-cleaning is under way and before cold weather sets in.'"/>

Advertisement for W.R. Winkler & Company featuring an illustration of a car in a garage and the text: 'HE DIDN'T COME TO OUR GARAGE. Our constant care of our customers' cars FREES them from cold weather worries. We will keep your carburetor properly adjusted, so the engine will be getting the right "mixture" for a QUICK START.'"/>

Advertisement for Boone Chevrolet Co. featuring a list of car features and the text: 'This Car has been carefully checked and none omitted where necessary. Motor, Radiator, New Axle, Transmission, Steering, Lighting, Ignition, Battery, Tires, Upholstery, Top, Fenders, Finish. Used car sales constitute a vital part of our business—consequently, our used car department is conducted on the same high business plane as our new car division. Look for our red "O. K." tag when you buy a used car. It is your proof that the car has been thoroughly reconditioned by expert mechanics, using genuine parts for replacement—your guarantee of superior VALUE!'"/>