

The Mountaineer

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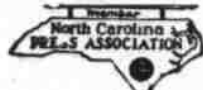
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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1941

Christmas Greetings

And so it is Christmas again, and time for The Mountaineer to make the rounds of its special friends and to wish them again good cheer and merriment for the season.

We bespeak for everyone an abundance of good wishes. First, for the readers of The Mountaineer, a numerous tribe, whom it is our privilege to serve constantly and our hope to serve more and more creditably as time goes on. To you, wherever you may be, some of you hundreds of miles away, we wish to give you a Merry Christmas greeting.

To the advertisers whose patronage we have enjoyed during the past year we express our deep appreciation. Though transactions between us are indubitably, as between buyer and seller, confidence and mutual good has characterized our relations and imbued them with friendliness and the cordiality of long acquaintance. For you, we wish a Merry Christmas and a bountiful one.

And to people of the county in general we extend our best wishes, in appreciation of the support given us during the year 1941.

Faith At Christmastide

Possibly some of us have grown cynical about Christmas. We have seen it overlaid with the greedy hand of commercialism. We have resented the mock sentimentality with which it has been invested.

Like old Scrooge in Dicken's immortal Christmas Carol, we say that "Merry Christmas" is humbug. But something happened to Scrooge that brought out his submerged better self. It may happen to us if we are willing to risk it. Go down town at the busy shopping hour of the Christmas season and watch the crowd. Study the faces that go by. Many of them are full of anxiety for the happiness of others.

They are moved by the spirit of giving rather than getting and their faces cannot hide the wonder of it. If faith has grown dim let it be revived again. Cynicism can never make us happy. Neither can it make a better world. Goodness is built out of faith—and the root of that goodness is God. This the Divine mystery of Christmas—that it gives God a rightful place in our lives.

"Whatever else is lost among the years
 Let us keep Christmas still a shining thing;
 Whatever doubts assail us, or what fears,
 Let us hold close one day, remembering
 Its poignant meaning for the hearts of men,
 Let us get back our childlike faith again."

That is the only way to get the Christmas spirit.

Music--A Christmas Joy

Christmas and music are inseparably linked: It would be hard to think of Christmas without the songs that we all love. The first Christmas had the carols of the angels and the Christmas songs and refrains continue to be a satisfying part of the celebration of the birthday of the Christ-Child.

For weeks church choirs and school groups have been singing Christmas carols. Over the radio the Yuletide songs are coming and they give one a real seasonal joy, not to be derived from any other source.

There is merit, of course in new music that is composed from time to time, and much of it will become among the compositions that will live forever. But at Christmas time there is general agreement that the old tunes are the most heart warming.

Nothing can quite give one the feeling that comes with "Silent Night" and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing". They seem as much a part of Christmas as is Santa Claus.

The Meaning Of Christmas

As Christmas Time approaches there arises in us a sense of gratitude to the Providence which gave to us the high moral philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth, called the Christ. His is the gospel of love, of charity, generosity, kindness, patience, mercy and of peace. What a contrast between the ideals which He gave to the world and those ideals which seem to prevail in a goodly part of the world today.

The world has not forgotten His ideals. They will never be forgotten, because they respond too readily to the natural instincts of the human heart and soul, and humanity will cling to them until the race itself is swallowed up into God's eternity.

In some quarters of the globe the ideals of the Nazarene have been temporarily laid aside for something which ignorant and vicious despots think will better serve their purpose, but these things are temporary and will ultimately be repudiated by Mankind as unworthy of Man made in the image of his Creator.

The conquest of the humble Galilean was not by the sword but rather by the power of a divinely gentle personality. He leads men not into the ways of hatred and war nor against steel and concrete ramparts, but rather into the ways of love and peace, which are the only open roads into the citadels of human hearts. There are His victories, there His glories, and there the hopes of Mankind.—Thos. J. Harkins, Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina, in the Orphan's Friend and Masonic Journal.

Stars

Stars are bright in wintry skies—before snow comes. They are clear as at no other season. The night is a great inverted bowl. A deep dark-blueness, full of symbolic meaning. He who looks upward seems to himself to be standing in space. Things mundane disappear from reckoning. There remain only the stars—and he who watches. But soon even awareness of oneself seems to fade from consciousness. Time ceases. Care, fear, anxiety, prejudice drop away, as a garment too mean to be worn.

This is the season of the Star. It must have been on a night such as this that the Wise Men saw it in the East and followed it. It was a long journey westward by camel.

... and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where they young child was.

What watcher of the skies fails to think of that Star as the anniversary approaches? Or to express the heartfelt desire for a clearer understanding of its message—for oneself and for all mankind?

Good Will Toward Men

Each nation of this earth has holidays which they celebrate and give homage to its heroes and important events of history, but there is one anniversary that belongs to the world.

But the historical events of history are transcended by one event that is celebrated by all nations. Only once a year the whole world echoes with tidings of joy sung by all people.

Ever since the Virgin Mother laid her Baby in its manger bed in Bethlehem, Christmas has been God's gift to every home, the equal possession of all mankind.

The day comes this year in a confused world which in some places it will be very hard to say a "Merry Christmas". With the clouds of war it is difficult to renew our faith and hope that there will ever be complete "peace on earth, good will toward men."

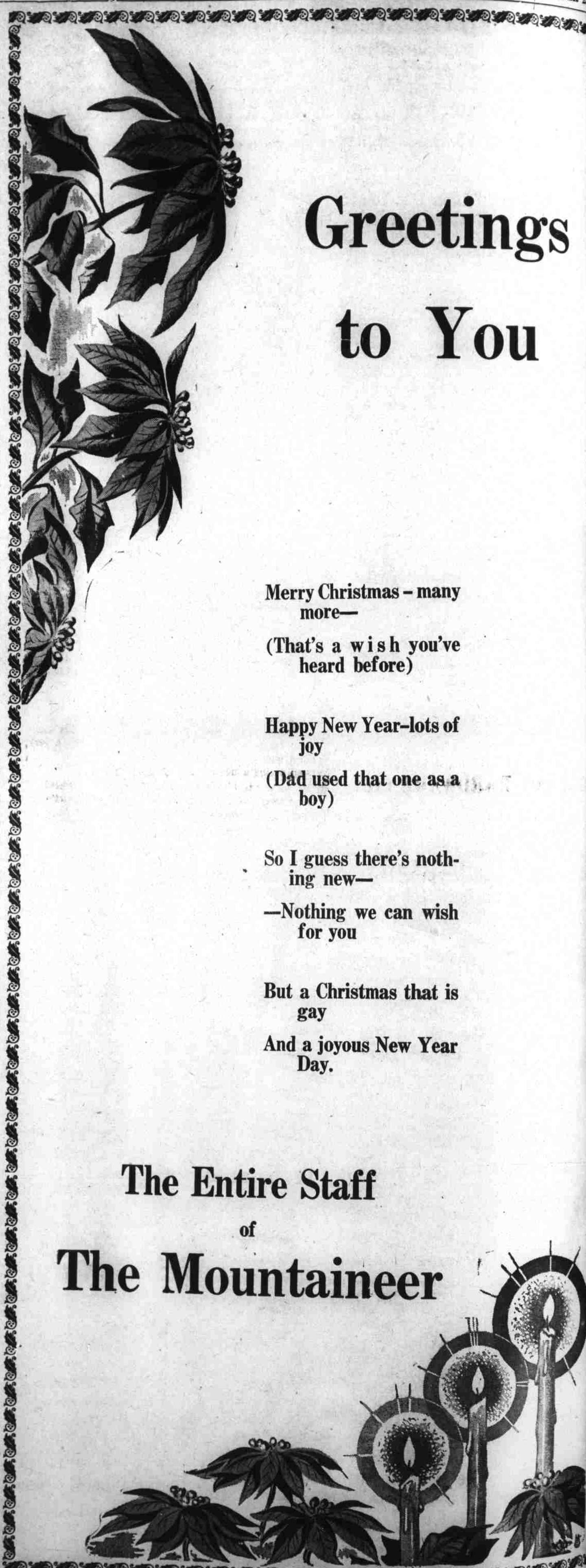
Christmas should lift the eyes of men from worldly trials to the vision of a Living Christ, newborn at this time. It should life man's mind to the knowledge of God's love. It should bring us that neighborly love which such communities as ours typify, but today we must span a wide gap to reach this state of mind. The world at war breeds hate in the land, and we must make an extra effort to put aside the natural impulses that arise in our hearts at such a time.

"Give Me A Light..."

One year King George VI of England used in his Christmas radiocast a quotation by M. Louise Haskins. The quotation was later used by the British War Relief Society on a card and offered for sale by them.

The quotation: "I said to a man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown', and he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way'."

That quotation is significant in America today.



Greetings to You

Merry Christmas - many more—

(That's a wish you've heard before)

Happy New Year-lots of joy

(Dad used that one as a boy)

So I guess there's nothing new—

—Nothing we can wish for you

But a Christmas that is gay

And a joyous New Year Day.

The Entire Staff of The Mountaineer