

The Salemite

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LITTLE THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.
—Luke 2:14.

Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirits dare to stir abroad;
And nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, no witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is the time.
—Shakespeare (Hamlet)

PARAGRAPHS

We don't have to be mathematicians any longer to count the number of days before the Christmas holidays. Just one hand and two fingers!

Finally we're sure that winter is here. Even Dr. Rondthaler, who is an authority on signs of spring, must admit that winter has made its much belated debut. To make her "coming out" the more spectacular, she wore a brilliant dress—the latest model from the North Pole—of snow, sleet, and ice.

And there's another reason we like to see Christmas approaching. It's the only time of the year we can really appreciate the concert voices of Dr. Rondthaler and Dr. Ansonbe. Let's sing "Joy to the World" often.

What happened to our muffins for breakfast. Today makes nineteen days since we've had them. And no we like muffins?



A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Christmas is in the air!
Here 'tis again—the good old Holiday season that makes us pack all our Raggedy-Ann winter clothes in our trunk for mother to darn, that makes us home to see all the folks, that puts the good old spirit in our bones, which makes us want to fill a little vagabond's stocking, that makes us want to stand under the mistletoe and be kissed! (This is a naive confession contributed by one of the future old maids now residing in Biting Dormitory.)

If you don't believe the season's here, you surely didn't go to Salem Day at the Anchor Store last week. The show-windows typified an old-fashioned Salem Christmas, the quaint fireplace, the antique furniture, the glittering, many-pointed star, the striped stockings hanging on the mantle-piece—these made an inspiring Yuletide picture of long ago. Now, even the streets are "decked with boughs of holly," Christmas bells, and vari-colored lights. Next time you start downtown at night to the movie, make your masculine friend pause a moment with you at O'Hanlon's corner, and look all around you. If you don't get the Christmas spirit then, something bad is wrong with you.

Have you noticed the furtive glances, and the mysterious disappearances of your friends lately? Just this, every furtive glance means a Christmas gift—for you! Ah, but that's not the right attitude to take, of course. On Christmas you should always think of giving, not receiving gifts. By the way, have you heard anybody say what she's going to give me?

The other day I was rummaging in my room-mate's closet (looking for a straight pin!) and I came upon a tiny brown package, nicely wrapped and tucked in a dark corner, way behind her last winter's coat. "My Christmas present!" I thought. I. After a short and ineffectual struggle with my conscience, during which combat my conscience curled up and died, I unwrapped the attractive package and found—milk-balls!

After which intense disappointment, I shall wish you a merry Christmas—forever "n" ever.

CANDLES

These candles are such lovely things,
All amber-tipped and bright;
They give the mellow radiance
I like on Christmas night.

So I have lighted small red ones
Upon the waiting tree;
Tall green ones on the mantel shelf
To show the room to me.

But this so slender, silver one—
Much beauty cheaply priced—
I bought to mark my window sill
With halo of the Christ.

And shepherd-like, all through the night
Watching across the hill,
It will remind some traveler
Of peace—and of good will!
—Clara Hood Pape.

LIGHT OF BETHLEHEM

'Tis Christmas night; the snow,
A foot unnumbered lies;
The old Judean stars aglow,
Keep watch within the skies.

An icy stillness holds
The pulse of the night;
A deeper mystery enfolds
The wondering Hosts of Light

'Till, lo, with reverence pale
The dim eastward bending, hail
The luridest earthward bending, hail
The Light of Bethlehem.
—John B. Tabb.

-POETRY-

BALLAD OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

There was no sorrier man than I,
(A singing star in the winter night)
Who saw the spirit of Christmas die,
(Oh evergreen bough and holly!)

The Spirit of Christmas, year by year,
Grew thin with horror and pale with fear,

Pale with fear for the vanishing
Of the Angel Song and the Manger
Birth.

I saw the Spirit shudder and stop
Before the door of Ye Xmasse Shoppe
Biting Dormitory.)

And the Shoppe was full of trumpery
toys,
Gilded trinkets, and money, and noise,

Hands that were soft and eyes that
glinted here,
Buying Good Will on a colored card.

The Spirit of Christmas wept to see
The dollar sign on the lighted tree,

Never a candle burning dim,
But placards shrieking: "For Her!"
"For Him!"

Money flowed in a smothering tide,
And the Spirit of Christmas drooped
and died,

And over the snow the wind was cold
And the buyers bought and the trad-
ers sold.

Dead the Spirit of Christmas lay,
And a small child came along that
way.

Proud and happy, the child displayed
An awkward gift that her hands
had made . . .

I am the gladdest of mortal men,
(A singing star in the winter night)
Who saw, at the touch of a child of
ten,

The Spirit of Christmas live again!
(Oh evergreen bough and holly!)
—Stoddard King.

CHRISTMAS MORNING

If Bethlehem were here today,
Or this were very long ago,
There wouldn't be a winter time
Nor any cold or snow.

I'd run out through the garden gate,
And down along the pasture walk;
And off beside the cattle barn,
I'd hear a kind of gentle talk.

I'd move the heavy iron chain,
And pull away the wooden pin;
I'd push the door a little bit,
And tiptoe very softly in.

The pigeon and the yellow hens
And all the cows would stand
away;
Their eyes would open wide to see
A lady in the manger hay.

If this were very long ago
And Bethlehem were here today,
And Mother held my hand and
smiled—
I mean the lady would—And she
Would take the woolly blankets off
Her little boy so I could see.

His shut-up eyes would be asleep,
And he would look just like our
John,
And he would be all crumpled too,
And have a pinkish color on.

I'd watch his breath go in and out,
His little clothes would be all
white,
I'd slip my finger in his hand
To feel how he could hold it tight.

And she would smile and say, "Take
Care."
The Mother, Mary, would, "Take
Care!"

And I would kiss his little hand
And touch his hair.

While Mary put the blankets back,
The gentle talk would soon begin
And when I'd tiptoe softly out
I'd meet the Wise Men going in
—Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

THE CHRISTMAS BABE

So small that lesser lowliness
Must bow to worship or caress;
So great that heaven itself to know
Love's majesty must look below.
—John B. Tabb.

Week-End Travels In the Realms of Gold

"Much Have I Travelled in the Realms of Gold"

Do you still like to read delightful children's stories? If you don't care to read them, of course you like to look at brightly-colored pictures such as are found in James Baldwin's interpretation of the famous *Story of Siegfried*. This book does not give a literal translation of the old Siegfried myths, but the changes made by Mr. Baldwin add to the charm of a story which has failed to grow old during many centuries. Perhaps the charm of the book lies in the fact that it is a story of adventures and a story easily comprehended. If term papers bore you too much, travel thousands of miles from them with Siegfried.

Have you ever been to Russia? Were you ever tempted to rebel against all authority? If you haven't been to Russia, just get an idea of Russian life through Turgenieff's *Fathers and Sons*. The struggle between old and new forces of Russian society is depicted vividly through the story of Bazaroff and Kirsanoff, two young men who resent restraint and whose fathers adhere to authority. Ivan Turgenieff, a Russian himself, has given a realistic and sincere picture of the battle between fathers and sons. If you have ever rebelled against something you didn't believe in, perhaps you can sympathize with Bazaroff and Kirsanoff.

An old, white-headed fiddler, sitting on his doorstep lazily plays his fiddle and sadly looks into space. Unconsciously he is sitting there, never once conscious of the music he is producing. Wouldn't you just love to slip up beside him and watch him jump as he sees you? Then how much you would enjoy the Kentucky ballads that he might be singing if you begged hard enough. I think I would ask him to sing from Henry Fumon's *Ballads of the Kentucky Highlands*, a wonderful selection of old ballads. Of course the old fiddler could never sing them all, for the book contains over two hundred songs. Don't you want to look them over? *Ballads of the Kentucky Highlands* is on the "Have You Read These?" table in the library.

The *Story of Siegfried* — James Baldwin
Fathers and Sons — Ivan Turgenieff
Ballads of the Kentucky Highlands — Henry Fumon

THIS GIVING BUSINESS

Our present custom of Christmas giving has several interesting origins but the rudimentary principal of the whole system is the fact that people just have to give, in other words, they feel the urge. The Egyptians, Israelites and even those highly colored African tribes in ages far removed knew how to pull the strings which would place them in favor with their kings. The old Romans, all of whom weren't really old at all, had the terrible habit of thrusting gifts upon their most honorable and all-powerful senators at the most inopportune time. In fact, the habit was so terrible that, in order to avoid confusion, they chose New Year's Day as the definite time for bestowing gifts and hence the word wonderful and soon everybody began to receive and give gifts. But, alas, one New Year's Day Claudius awoke and found no gift; so he, having the welfare of the state at home, decided the kind heard Anglo-Saxons could do well by a little friendly exchange. From England the custom began to spread and it travelled all over Europe about as fast as gossip does around girls' colleges or any other high-minded institutions.

Now, most authorities say that Christmas gifts were invented to take the place of New Year's gifts just because somebody got it into his head that New Year's gifts were paganistic. Then again there are those who say that our present system comes directly from the Priest's love to win which took place around giving Christmas in the early Roman era. But let's let Rome be for a time, and just take it for granted that for one most authorities are correct.

The whole change from New Year to Christmas came about by the divine inspiration of two saints, St. Augustine and Chrysostom. The former called New Year's gifts diabolical, and the latter, for no good reason at all except for the sake of to win approval, said the custom of New Year made gift giving a Satanic extravagance. Certainly, these early divines could not stand for such a thing any further, so they decided to which they collaborated by the means of necromantic telepathy and decided that Christmas gifts would be substitutes for the New Year's gifts.

The advantage was that Christmas gifts should carry the abstraction of good will, generosity and kindness. The decision was accepted and today the custom of giving New Year's gifts is rare.

This, as a little aside, this Christmas when your friends give you the accustomed lovely gifts (i. e., unless the depression is leaving to big an impression) just remember that they don't do it on account of any great altruistic sentiment. It's not so nice to think of, but the fact is that they are giving because their grandmothers gave, because their great grandmothers gave, because the Roman conquerors thought the English people might do better if they did as the Romans did.
—Elinor Phillips.

The Seat of Success

"Please tell me," begs a reader, "what's this 'seat' which they say 'shapes our ends'?"

"We're not certain," says the Editor, "but it used to be our mother's hairbrush and our dad's slipper."

MERRY CHRISTMAS

