

CHRISTMAS IN THE WIND AND FLAMES

By GLENN HOLDER

There is a mournful menace in the wind tonight. It mutters and moans of the failings of men as it whirls around the chimney corner now in a minor, plaintive sort of funeral sound, now in a wailing crescendo of sorrow. I sit by the gaily dancing flames, listening, wondering, and I am sad.

It is nearly Christmas time, and the Christmas feel is in the air. It tingles in your blood, queerly elating you even when you are thinking of sorrowful things. It makes you remember that the Holy Season is near at hand, when the spirit of Giving, such as was felt by the Wise Men as they poured out their gifts before the stable stall wherein lay the Being on that wonderful night long ago, makes most of the world happy. But the wind sobs of the rest, of those who will not be happy on Christmas Morning—perhaps of the wanderer who will sit in a hotel lobby that day, homeless, friendless, Godless, bitterly watching the happy faces of those who blithely hurry to and fro, imbued with the Spirit that is Christmas.

Now the voice of the wind becomes a crooning diminuendo, and it whispers to me of the Babe that lay in the Manger in the little village of Bethlehem long ago. It softly sings of Mother Love and of happy family groups around the Christmas hearth.

Again it becomes a shrill shrieking roar. It screams of those who do not know the meaning of Christmas, and who do not care; those who look upon it merely as a time of drinking and feast. I look into the firelight, and forget the wind and its tortured refrain. For in the cheery, glowing heart of the leaping flames I read a message of peace, contentment, good will to men—the real Spirit of Christmas is there.

LET US HAVE PEACE

By GRAHAM TODD

Peace—like that which is portrayed in the face of an old man whose life work is done; who goes into his grave leaving a spotless record of service and fellowship behind; and who is not forgotten after the stonemason pounds the last chisel to form his epitaph; should be our's on this nineteenth-hundred and twenty-fifth Christmas.

Love—like that which is portrayed on the face of an aged Mother, a white-haired, plump, little wisp of heaven; Mother, who has watched her older boy forsake her for a wife and home, older girls likewise for a husband and home, younger boy and girl for parties, college and good-times; and love them still as if they were the same babes and mischievous children that once were.

And why not peace and love toward our fellows? There is no war, draining the blood of our "youth" and the income of our "age". There is life, throbbing, pulsing, busy life; and prosperity as there has not been for many a year.

Let us them have peace of soul and mind—and nations. We are the coming generation, and the youth of today, the age of tomorrow; it is with us, and it is for us to decide—let us have peace!

AFTER-GLOW

By ERNEST WILLIAMS

Christmas, the symbol of universal peace and happiness, is bearing down upon us with express train speed. These last few days before Christmas are fraught with excitement and anticipation. Everywhere we see shimmering tinsel, glittering Christmas trees, holly wreathed windows and glistening festival decorations. The winter winds bring to our ears the faint far away tones of melodious Christmas carols. The material exhibition of Christmas, on every hand, whirls us into the magic grasp of the holiday spirit; then suddenly with a bang! Christmas arrives and departs, leaving a wrecked and toppling world of materialism.

The lasting afterglow suffices the world after the first spectacular flare of Christmas. The spirit of the Prince of Peace, that we feel in the after-glow, permeates and prevails in the hearts of men, bringing that quiet peacefulness that only the spirit of Christ can bring. The tranquil peace of the after-glow lives; the material things fade and die.

THE GIFT

By ELIZABETH ROCKWELL

"I would be giving and forget the gift."

Only eight small words, yet they convey a big thought—a beautiful thought; they embody the spirit that dominates the multitude the month of December and that manifests the approach of Christmas.

There are two kinds of gifts; those that are given in a spirit of love and gratitude, and those that are given with a view to the returns they will bring. Lowell has said:

"Not what we give, but what we share; For the gift without the giver is bare."

After all, every man, woman and child is endowed with the power to give the most perfect and most precious of gifts—the gift of happiness. Approximately nine people out of every ten never think of giving gifts except at Christmas time, although there are 365 days in the year when an opportunity presents itself to do a Christ-like deed in bestowing happiness upon others. Somewhere there is someone whose every desire and whim is gratified, but who is, nevertheless, unhappy; and it may be your privilege to supply the little spark that will penetrate the gloom. Not, in this instance, by an elaborate or costly gift, but by a token that radiates heartfelt love and appreciation.

ONCE A YEAR

By JOHN MEBANE

Throughout the ages of the past there is one season that has never changed. Men say that things change. They even go so far as to prove that each year a higher stage of development is achieved. But there is one season that carries with it, always, the same unaltered sentiment, the same mental and spiritual attitude. The birth of Christ comes through the generations bearing with it the same thoughts, the same delightful atmosphere.

Each year we continue to find that the more we give, the more pleasure we derive from giving. No one would dare to tell us that we cannot eat yards of peppermint candy or that our mechanical toys are quite useless and will soon break.

Each year the same signs, "Do your Christmas Shopping Early" appear in gaudily clothed windows. But we hesitate until we read "Three more shopping days until Christmas" and then grasp wildly at every available token because we realize that it is too late for the long-contemplated, sensible reasoning.

Each year Santa Claus makes display of his long, flowing, white beard and his pack of toys. He struts in front of the large toy shops and makes tiny hearts happy and thrilled.

Each year the toy-filled shop windows assume the delicate glow of red and green. The very windows, themselves, fill one with the spirit of the season.

There is no one of us who does not derive a real, satisfying pleasure from the bustle and clamor of frenzied shopping because it adds to the happiness of others. At this wonderful season an unnatural feeling of happiness overcomes and conquers us entirely. We hold no grudges. And it is then that we draw vast resources from our huge reservoir of Kindness.

THE OTHER SANTA CLAUS

By PAUL WIMBISH

There is a Santa Claus! All who read this may laugh at such a statement, but they forget the days of their childhood. Then they believed and then their dreams at Christmas were built around this wonderful old man who gave freely to the deserving and punished the wicked.

In the lives of the grown-ups there remains this Santa Claus, but he stands in the form of another person and acts in another name. He also gives the good and bad their just deserts, but not only at Christmas; his work goes on the year round and HE is called the Christ.

Indeed, Christmas is to celebrate the arrival of the Christ-child on this earth. The presents given are representing the "peace on earth, good will toward men." There remains in the world today a Santa Claus and there he will always remain in the hearts of the people. For He "The Giver of Gifts is the Santa Claus to the grownups, as the other Santa is to the children."

IS THERE A SANTA CLAUS?

By JOHN MEBANE

"Ma, there ain't no Santa Claus."

"No Santa Claus? Why, child, who put such an idea beneath your curly lock? No Santa Claus? Why, of course there is a Santa Claus."

That mother is right. There is a Santa Claus. Not a little, fat fellow with a long, flowing white beard who drives over housetops with his reindeer. No, not a plump, little man in a red fur suit, who climbs down through your chimney with a pack on his back, nor a jolly old fellow who lives at the North Pole and creates all kinds of wonderful toys for you.

No. But Santa Claus is created by just such an atmosphere. A spirit created by the atmosphere of happiness, of joy, of kindness. A spirit created by the fancies of youthful mind and the fantasies of old. A spirit promoted by the fanciful visions of thousands of happy, immature minds. A sensation encouraged by the unknown millions. A sensation developed through ages of immaturity into the highest degree of excellence. A sensation developed from an idea into a reality.

To childish minds Santa Claus is peculiarly related to a fairy. Not exactly weird, fantastic sort of creature, but living, human, filled with the real life. To them Santa Claus is gifted with the power of "changeability." He can enter through the smallest chimneys; he can ride over millions of snow-covered housetops. Ah, how human to a little child.

But to us, a living spirit, and it will live on and on through the years until the end of eternity as it has lived through the countless ages past. It will develop through the years as it has developed; it will continue to be the joyous expectation of happy youth.

And it will remain a reality, a living sensation for ever.

CHIMES

By HENRY BIGGS

Chimes, rich, mellow chimes, announcing the birthday of the Savior, send their joyous message to the waking world. Then the soft, deep tones whisper to the sleeping children, rich children, poor children, fair children, under nourished children, telling them of all the wonders of toyland while visions of happy hours dance merrily through their brains. They sooth the wounded spirits; they brighten the gloom of garrets; they herald the anniversary of the coming of the Man of Gallilee.

Nothing can surpass the beauty of the chimes. The chimes of Milan and Venice are among the wonders of the world. The bells of Notre Dame are an inspiration to all that hear them. The chimes in High Point are beautiful.

G. H. S. has no bells to ring, no chimes to send forth the spirit of Christmas; but we are able at this Christmas time to bring happiness and joy to others: needy children, and those who are destined to suffer the pangs of blighted hopes and loneliness. Through kindness and sympathy we can ring as deep and true as the sweetest of chimes.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

By WELDON BEACHAM

I like a Christmas tree; to me a Christmas without a Christmas Tree just isn't. It's one thing that still signifies Christmas to me.

I've been robbed of Santa Claus, that whimsical old gentleman who doesn't come to see big boys. On Christmas morning I do not get a thrill out of rushing to the front room to see what toys there are for me to play with. No longer am I allowed the make-believe of playing trains, or of making string harness for tin horses.

Now, on Christmas morning, after my brother wakes me by pounding me on the head with his new pop gun, I just wander sleepily into the front room, look longingly at my brother's mechanical toys, open a few boxes of handkerchiefs and get ready for breakfast.

The only remnant of childhood-Christmas left to me is the Tree. I hope that I never have to give it up too.

"Presents," I often say, "Endears absence."
—Lamb.

FOLLOW THE STAR

By JAMES CLEMENTS

Nearly one thousand, nine hundred and twenty five years ago in the hills of far off Judea a group of shepherds and wise men saw a certain star. This star was by far the brightest star that had ever been seen and the rays of light from it lit up the whole Heaven. The shepherds and wise men followed the star until they came to where the Christ Child lay in the manger.

Even today like those men of the olden days we can still follow the star. Yes, even today in this twentieth century of industry we can still follow the star as the sons of old Judea did. The questions (do and it is natural that they should) arise in our minds, as to how, when and where.

The answer comes from the star; let us follow our ambition, right now A. D. 1925 here in the city of Greensboro. Yes, if we take our ambition for our star and follow it we are not liable to go wrong. Eventually we will reach our goal as the shepherds and wise men did. And the goal will be success.

We may have difficulties in following our star. The men of Judea did. But we can overcome these. Sometimes we think we haven't any ambition. These are foolish thoughts, or "apple sauce" so to say. We may not have our life work picked out yet, but the desire to make good is an ambition.

We should start right now this second to follow our star. We are now fast becoming what we will be. Only work and more work will enable us to follow the star. But we can do it. Of course, in some cases, it may not be possible to follow the star. But if not to follow it means to help someone else, let us help them first always, like "The Other Wise Man." May we remember the same Christ Child said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Students of the Greensboro High School, let's follow our star, ambition, and we will reach our goal, the portal of success. Or we, like the other Wise Man, will have the satisfaction of knowing we have fought a good fight.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS AT DAWN OF DAY

By MARY TILLY

Outside—the whistle of the wind as it whisked through the ice-laden bowers of the trees—a crunching sound of many feet in the distance—soft chords of music far away—gradually louder as the crunching of the footsteps drew near. They became soft vibrating sounds—beautiful—reverent echoes that seemed to cry out in the semi-darkness—which was the dawn of Christmas day. It seemed to pierce into the hearts, and to creep into the very souls of those who were fortunate enough to hear.

Inside—a cold, bare, dingy little room—a mere hovel. In the darkness lay a man, a poor, lonely, heartbroken man—alone, forgotten, crest-fallen. His hairy, cold, blue eyes opened—still wider—and he strained his ears to catch a sound—a faint, vibrating sound. His soul was filled with a longing—just to have another chance. He was dying of starvation—he was creeping nearer—still nearer to the verge of death.

A prayer—only a faint childlike prayer, from the lips of an old, old man—even though he could not be a child once more, he was born again that Christmas morn.

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

By MARGUERITE MASON

Is it true as some folks say Christmas spirit lives one day? Or does it last throughout the year Spreading joyous old time cheer?

Christmas spirit is an art, Of our very lives a part— Giving of our wealth of love Kin to that of God's above.

So instead of one day's cheer Let this spirit rule the year Let it reign within the heart And of living make an art.

Not what we give, but what we share, For the gift without the giver is bare.
—Lowell.

CHRISTMAS LIKKER

By GLENN HOLDER

Julius Caesar drove his chariot up to the taxi stand on Buchanan St. It was a dilapidated old truck with a cheese-cloth banner, bearing the words "Julius Caesar—Moving and Hauling" in grotesque red-ink characters, fluttering from the side.

Snorting and wheezing, for Julius' frame is amply upholstered with avoirdupois, he shakily descended from the ancient vehicle. "Whoopee, ah's done gone and done it now. It's Christmuss day, and I is gonna celebrate in de good ole fashun way. Dis is de best ole sho nuff honest to goodness, rip snortin', fire eating bottled-in-bond, bootleg booze what is ever been diskivered. Yessuh, it's de real ole cawn. Step right up, gents, and we'll all take a swaller," he shouted, pulling a quart bottle filed with a yellowish fluid out of his hip pocket and brandishing it over his head. Instantly he was surrounded by an eagerly snatching and gesticulation mob of dusky transfer and cab drivers. Each in turn elevated the flask, allowor some of the liquid to trickle down his throat, smacked his lips, and passed it on to the next man.

Eventually it reached the end of the line and was returned to Julius. "Come on, July, let's have another little drink. Jest a mite of a dram," they began to wheede.

"Now you go on, nigguhs. You don't git no mo' ob dis here likker. Dey's just about a good Jule-size swaller left, and Jule sho is gonna swaller it. Come to papa, baby booze," and he put the mouth of the bottle to his lips. But the bottle was never tilted upwards. Staring in horrified suspense, Jule saw big, bluff, blue coated Gene Johnson bearing down upon them. Gene had wandered stationward from his usual loafing place on Jefferson Square and spying the gang of negroes, had determined to discover the cause of excitement.

"Uh-huh, got you again, Julius Caesar," he said, grabbing the fat negro's arm in a grasp of steel. "Lord, that whiskey must have scrambled up what little brains there is in that fat, kinky old head of yours. Don't you remember Judge Collins soakin' you fifty bucks for gittin' drunk last Monday? You're in for it now."

"Nawsuh, Mistuh Gene, tain't so. Mah brains is all funkshunin' plumb proper and suitable, like they always does. Trouble is, dis here long, lean muddy drink of water here done tempted me by telling me bout dat good ole Scotch he drunk las' month", pointing to a very tall, very black cab-driver. "Taste it nohow, Mistuh Gene."

The officer, nothing loath, smelled it, looked puzzled, and then tasted it. "Aw, it ain't nothing but lemonade. What's the matter with you, anyhow?" he disgustedly queried.

"Well, you see, Cap'n Gene, it's dis way. Here it is Christmas day an' I ain't got no likker to git drunk on. So I buys me some lim'nade and puts it in a whiskey bottle and drinks it, so's I kin kid my stummick into thinkin' it's gettin some good ole cawn. Dat's all they is to it."

"I'm a great mind to run you in on general principles and let Judge Collins get ahold of you again. He'll give you a spell in jail this time."

"Nawsuh, Judge Collins ain't gonna put me in no jail. Mistuh Caffey done told him not to send me back up there no mo', cause I eats too much. "Nawsuh," Jule solemnly wagged his head. Without a word Gene turned on his heel and strode around the corner, chuckling to himself.

No sooner had he gotten out of sight than Jule became convulsed with laughter. "He-he-he. Thot I was drinkin' likker. He-he-he. Fooled him that time. He-he-he."

"What you laughin' at, you black buzzard you," Gene yelled, reappearing around the corner.

"Nohtin' atall, Cunel Gene. Just at ole Ambrose here," pointing to the long, lean, muddy drink of water. "He was skeered you was gonna rest me'n him. He-he-he."

A gift is precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it.

Old Testament Proverbs—17-8.