

OMAR THE CAMEL COMES TO CONVENT

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)
to stand in front of Mother and make facial expressions. "Register Jr.," Mother would say. Then "Surprise." Then "Sorrow."

Another time the Three Kings arrived pulling a thick, heavy rope. They tugged and grunted like longhorns, and the assembled Sisters strained to see the giant object that would have to be viewed at the end of the rope. The object: a toy camel, four inches in height.

Then there was the time the camel was live—one Sister was its front, the other its rear section, and the camel did a dance straight out of vaudeville.

As one might expect, the fun part never obscures the holiness of the occasion. One Epiphany dramatization by the novices applied the story of the Magi to their own lives. They made the Star of Bethlehem a symbol of their vocation and compared the relentless quest of the Wise Men for the new King with the promptness and perseverance with which the novice should answer the call of God.

When the king-for-a-day distributes gifts to all the Sisters they are usually little necessities like darning cotton, a typewriter ribbon, an eraser or a bottle of hand lotion. But one time the Sisters opened their packages to find each had received a toy. Little tin horns and toy drums accompanied Epiphany nights merriment that year, and the next day the toys were packed off to needy children.

There is also a gift from Mother Provincial for each Sister, and a gift for her from the community. Not the least of the bonuses of the feast is the suspension of the convent rule that the various groups—novices, postulants, novices and professed Sisters—lead completely separate lives. On Epiphany, in the spirit of the Magi's visit to the Christ Child, any member of the Mendham community may visit with any other, regardless of her stage in religious life.

SELECTING THE TREES
It is not only during Epiphany that the Provincial Superior assumes the role of mother-of-the-family in the holiday festivities. She begins early in Advent when she tours the motherhouse grounds selecting the finest evergreen trees which she labels with colored string for cutting for Christmas.

Then she proceeds to deny that there'll be a Christmas tree this year "because you haven't been good enough." The Sisters never take her word though; their favorite sport is searching for the bits of string and guessing which group will get the most shapely tree for their community room.

About Dec. 8, the convent corridors are pervaded with the positively heavenly scent of spices and baking fruit, a sign that the annual ritual of cookie baking had begun. Thousands of cookies are turned out according to wonderful old recipes, many from Germany. They are decorated, packaged and delivered to friends of the congregation. Some, of course, are kept for the Mendham "family."

Preparation of a soft bed of straw for the image of the Christ Child in the convent manger

takes all of Advent and is related to the old German Crisikindl custom. Each Sister draws the name of another at the start of Advent.

Crisikindl means Christ Child and the Sister whose name she has drawn becomes for her a symbolic Christ Child. All through Advent she will secretly perform acts of kindness for her Crisikindl. For a certain number of kindnesses she may add a straw to the manger.

So it is that a Sister often finds her shoes shined, her stockings darned, her veil pressed, or in her cell a plant or a bar of soap with a note from her secret friend. Elaborate secrecy ensures a surprise for everybody on the day after Christmas when the identity of each Crisikindl partnership is revealed. One young postulant turned red as a holly berry one year when she learned she'd been Mother Augustilde's Crisikindl and that all the mending, ironing and tidying had been done by the provincial superior.

LETTERS TO ST. NICK
An authentic Santa Claus makes his appearance at Mallinckrodt Convent—dressed as a Bishop on the feast of St. Nicholas, Dec. 6. It is a Sister who dresses in Bishop's robes and passes out the gifts the Sisters have requested in their letters to St. Nicholas. Gifts range from display letters for a classroom bulletin board all the way to a typewriter.

But it's not all candy canes and bright packages on St. Nicholas Day. The fly in the ointment is Ruprecht, the evil sprite (from German lore) who traditionally comes with sticks to whip bad children.

Ruprecht goes around at supper passing out sticks to the Sisters he feels have not been good during the year. Sometimes he goes outside and makes an awful racket and throws sticks through open windows. The unruly chap, like the Bishop, is portrayed by a Sister.

The candles of the convent Advent Wreath burn down; Golden Wednesday—the day of taking from the convent ladder to give to the poor—comes and goes. The excitement of Christmas mounts.

At 4:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve the Sisters, novices, postulants and aspirants are in the chapel chanting, "When wilt Thou come, my Jesus . . ." Mother Provincial is leading prayers for their benefactors, families and friends.

Then Mother escorts her "family" to the auditorium where the aspirants present the story of Christmas in song and narration with elaborate scenery and lighting effects.

After the pageant there is a gay procession to the community rooms where the superior blesses each Christmas tree. The novices and Sisters have trimmed their own trees, but for the young aspirants and postulants, their tree is a delightful surprise—as it would be to the youngest members of a family at home.

Then, led by carolers—"O hasten, dear children, O come one and all . . ."—it's off to the dining rooms where, in an atmosphere of wreaths and pine boughs await little mounds of goodies for each Sister along with her gift from "Mother."

After each Sister has made her Christmas Eve meditation before the tabernacle of the Ex-

pected One, Mats are erected at 11:30 p.m. Then, into the dim chapel files the procession of white-robed postulants—their red and green and gold vigil lights the only illumination. Three carry the wood-carved figure of the Christ Child which once rested on the traditional spot in Bethlehem where the Nativity took place.

EXPECTATION REALIZED
At the end of the procession the priest who will celebrate midnight Mass places the figure of the Child into the creche. All the while the Sisters are singing the Austrian hymn, "Silent Night." At the line, "Shepherds quake at the sight . . ." the chapel becomes suddenly bright.

The sweet young voices of the novices commence to sing the Mass, the Communion climaxes the weeks of expectation, and after Mass the Sisters sing, " . . . good night, sweet Infant! Dear, Love has brought us to These here . . ."

To round out the convent celebration there are cookies, coffee and conversation after midnight Mass, carols and visits to the creches in all the community rooms the next day, family visiting the following Sunday, the blessing of St. John's Wine on Dec. 27, and the feast of the Holy Innocents when the youngest novice becomes novice mistress for the day.

Said one veiled teenager at the convent, "My first Christmas away from home was my happiest yet."

'LET EVERY HEART PREPARE HIM ROOM'

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)
And all they that heard it, wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Fashionably Speaking

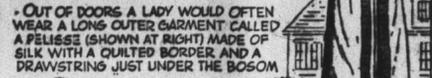
by JEAN LUBAN

Indispensable! That's what most fashionables say about their favorite travel companion—the all wool double knit suit. This one by R & K in two handsome parts—the hipbone skimming jacket lengthens via ombred stripes to match the slim skirt. A perfect traveler, it goes in and out of a suitcase and loses nothing except its wrinkles.

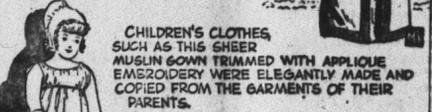
What They Wore . . . by PHYLLIS JOYCE



WHEN GEORGE WASHINGTON WAS PRESIDENT THE FRENCH INFLUENCE WAS APPARENT IN LADIES' DRESS. TYPICAL WAS A GOWN OF FLOWERED SILK DRAPED OVER FRAMEWORKS CALLED PANIERS WITH AN UNDERSKIRT OF PLAIN COLOR TRIMMED WITH BOX PLEATING



OUT OF DOORS A LADY WOULD OFTEN WEAR A LONG OUTER GARMENT CALLED A PELLESSE (SHOWN AT RIGHT) MADE OF SILK WITH A QUILTED BORDER AND A DRAWSTRING JUST UNDER THE BOSOM



CHILDREN'S CLOTHES, SUCH AS THIS SHEER MUSLIN GOWN TRIMMED WITH APPLIQUE EMBROIDERY WERE ELEGANTLY MADE AND COPIED FROM THE GARMENTS OF THEIR PARENTS.

TODAY WHEN BUYING WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' APPAREL LOOK FOR THIS LABEL . . . THE SYMBOL OF DECENTY, FAIR LABOR STANDARDS AND THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE

STRICTLY AN AMERICAN AFFAIR



Bob Hope takes time out from his film-making ("A Global Affair" with Michelle Mercier, left and Lilo Pulver, center) to remember that it's Christmas time—and that U. S. Savings Bonds are gifts that grow with the years.

SANTA'S WHISKERS



THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS CARTOON HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY DRAWN FOR YOUR USE BY KARL HUBENTHAL OF THE LOS ANGELES HERALD-EXAMINER, PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN EDITORIAL CARTOONISTS.

IT'S A SAVINGS BONDS HOLIDAY FOR LOVELY MRS. AMERICA



Mrs. Lyle Mitchell of San Diego, California dresses her Christmas tree with the "gift that keeps on giving," and even sees a huge stocking to hold an enlarged Savings Bond—all to help her extend holiday greetings and remind us that Savings Bonds make wonderful gifts for relatives and friends. "My husband and I practice what we preach. In his job at the telephone company he encourages his associates to buy Bonds regularly through the Payroll Savings Plan. We also give bonds to each of our five children on their birthdays and at Christmas time for their future education."

A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)
Grandpa's eyes, and he looked down, and saw Mary bending over the Child Jesus," she said softly, her eyes bright with mother love.

Grandpa dropped to his knees in the snow beside a group of shepherds. His eyes were suddenly blurred with tears. When his sight cleared, three strange looking men came with gifts for the child. Grandpa saw them kneeling there, and his heart ached, for he had nothing to give. Unless?

The winter night was bitter cold, and he saw the Child shiver. Something to keep him warm, Grandpa thought, and unbuttoned his coat, with trembling fingers, and bowing low, offered it to Joseph.

Joseph helped Mary wrap the coat closely around the Child and Mary said gently, "It's the love in your heart that warms my Child, for love is the best gift of all."

The Child turned his head and Grandpa felt his eyes upon him, and his heart swelled with such happiness as he had never known before.

MORNING
He felt a hand on his shoulder, shaking him gently, and he opened his eyes to see sunlight streaming through his bedroom window. Tom and Doreen stood beside

his bed. "Look!" they cried together. "Santa put this big box under the tree for you, Grandpa."

He looked at the box they carried, tied with red ribbon and decorated with a sprig of holly. Through the open door of his bedroom he could see the Christmas tree sparkling and shimmering. Groaning, he pulled himself up, and to please the two bright eyed young things, he untied the ribbon and opened the box. Speechless, he sat looking at the fine new overcoat. He thought whimsically, if only I had had this last night!

Last night? A remembered warmth and joy surged through him. "Doreen," he said, "bring me my old coat, like a good girl."

"Your old one?" she cried. "But don't you like this new one?"

"Of course, I do, child. It's an elegant coat. I shall never wear any other. But, just to please me, bring the old one."

She trotted away, looking puzzled and not to happy, and returned with the threadbare coat. "It feels so warm, Grandpa," she said, holding it against her cheek. "And it was in that cold closet upstairs."

He nodded and smiled. "Hang up the new coat there by the door where I can admire it," he said.

He folded the old coat carefully and wrapped it in the tissue paper and put it into the box. Then he closed the cover

and re-tied the ribbon, setting the sprig of holly in the center of the bow. He was remembering the love in the bright eyes of the Child as they gazed at him over the collar of this old coat last night.

"There!" Grandpa Bill said proudly. "In this box lies a gift—the memory of the happiest Christmas Eve of my whole life. And I thought I'd have no part in the holy celebration!"

They stood looking at him wonderingly.

"But the new coat will keep you warmer than the old one," Tom said practically.

Grandpa Bill held out his arms to them, and they flung themselves upon him joyously. "A merry, merry Christmas to you, children!" he said happily. "And don't forget, it's the love in our hearts that really keeps us warm."

HOLLIDAY & HOOKY



MERRY CHRISTMAS

The Yuletide Season reminds us of the gratitude we owe you, our customers, for your steady, kind patronage. May our constant daily efforts to improve our service to you repay that debt in no small measure. And so, Merry Christmas, everyone!

WOOD'S 5-10¢ STORE

117 E. Martin St. Raleigh, N. C. TE 2-5926

Silent Night

May the true spirit of Christmas fill the hearts of men everywhere.

BUFFALOE & CO. BUILDERS

1722 S. Saunders St. TE 2-3243

MERRY CHRISTMAS

and friendly wishes for a happy Holiday Season. May you continue to enjoy happiness and prosperity throughout the year.

Arnold Jacobs

VOGUE