

Christmas At The Barracks



"I HATE Christmas!" Marcia thought passionately. She pressed her face close to the fog window, so passersby would not notice her burning cheeks nor tearful eyes.

Suddenly she was face to face with it—that overwhelming longing for some one to make Christmas worthwhile. "Why am I such a fool?" she asked herself miserably. "A grown woman weeping at a store window display!"

She hurried on to her lonely flat, and stood looking in the mirror. Thirty-two! "I don't feel old," she said.

After a while she got up and washed her face, determined to be sensible. She couldn't get on—she was too shaken—so she sat down with the home paper. No use trying to avoid the Christmas rub. Might as well face the fact that no one really cared—

Well, why not find some one? And then, as though in answer, she saw the front in the paper.

"Poor children of this and neighboring communities will be treated to a real old-fashioned Christmas dinner and tree at the McKinley barracks. Officers and men are providing turkey and all the trimmings, and several hundred children are expected. Churches and social agencies are being asked to furnish women to act as chaperones and also cars to transport the children to the barracks."

Marcia slipped timidly into the social welfare bureau. "I wonder if you could use me to help take the children out to the barracks on Christmas," she asked. "It would be so much nicer than—than anything else," she finished.



He Was Taking the Coat Off a Taut-Headed Boy.

Imely. She had really meant that it would be nicer than a sympathy dinner invitation from one of her friends. "I even thought maybe if I happened to find the right youngster—I might adopt one."

She stopped, a little breathless. She hadn't meant to commit herself so far. Yet the lady was very kind, and arrangements were easily made.

She had never been to the barracks before, and she thrilled to the ride over the snowy road, but she was more fascinated by the children under her care. Their too bright eyes glittered, and they pressed sharp noses against the car windows, leaving marks where they had touched.

They were excited, terribly excited, but happy, too. So was Marcia. Joy and excitement shone from her eyes, making her usually pleasant but rather plain countenance radiant.

He stood tall and straight in his officer's uniform, a handsome man, not many years her senior. As soon as the children began eating, he came over and introduced himself.

"Having a good time?" he asked. "Glorious!" "So are you." "What?"

"Glorious, of course. Don't mind my bothering, do you? I thought you seemed, well—understanding. When I was looking at you—remember?" Marcia nodded. "Somebody once said that if you look into a person's eyes, you create a bond that can never be broken. I know what he meant, now."

"I felt it, too," Marcia murmured. He looked about. "I say, shall we ditch the program? I'd like to show you around the barracks, if you'd let me."

They didn't notice the cold, the falling snow, nor, later, the children's carols.

"Goodness!" Marcia exclaimed at last. "They're leaving. I must look after my carload of youngsters."

"Wait!" He caught her hand, held it fast. "I'll want to see you again, soon. We have so much in common, you know—we're both lonely, we like children, we enjoy Christmas parties—and I want to know if you like hiking and tobogganing, movies, operas, lots of things. Me, for instance."

"Of course," answered Marcia. "But let me go now. Here comes that welfare lady." She pulled away. "We were just coming," she apologized.

The lady smiled. "No hurry. But I wonder—you said something, you know—have you decided what child you want to adopt?"

"Heavens!" declared Marcia. "I forgot!"

"Well, why," asked the soldier, "adopt one? I mean—wait until next Christmas. Things change so in a year."

"In a day," breathed Marcia.

"Come, Let Us Adore Him," Happy Christmas Thought

THERE is a magical pause, a mysterious something in the air, an awakening of man's best and sweetest instincts as the Yuletide carols ring out the hallowed words: "Peace on earth, good will toward men." A pause when even the most sullen, forbidding, hard-hearted person feels an urge of the soul within him, to join in the merry festival of Christmas.

Then, too, there is magic in red holly berries, gray green branches of hellebore, mistletoe, and the perfume of woody evergreens, melting wax and the burning log. How mysteriously they recall sweet thoughts of long ago to the elders! How they fill the hearts of playful children with joyous delight!

Christmas is the significance of childhood, for almost two thousand years ago the Christ Child brought the redeeming message of love to the world. Love that keeps the little flame of hope burning; love that gives patience and courage to endure the problems of life; love that prompts the giving and receiving of gifts.

When Wise Men of the East, men of profound learning, saw a brilliant star and followed it, they found this little messenger of love in his rude and humble resting place, and they laid their most precious gifts before him.

These gifts were highly symbolical. Gold to a King, the King of Love and Humanity, Frankincense to a Divinity, the God of human needs. Myrrh for a man, and for the sorrow that redeems. Thus they recognized in a little Child, the King, the Divine and the Man.

As we commemorate Christ's birth each Yuletide, there is a radiant warmth and spirit of love in the giving and receiving of gifts; we pay homage and reverence to our King, our God and our Redeemer.—Agnes Myers

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Martha Found a Way to Raise Christmas Funds

CHRISTMAS was drawing nearer and nearer, but Martha Woods seemed no nearer a solution of her problem. The giving of gifts at the Yuletide season had been a tradition with Martha as long as she could remember. This year, however, she saw no way to keep up the cherished custom.

During the past months her income had shriveled to where it would buy only the necessities for herself and Emma, her faithful servant. Through no scrimping or saving could even the latest gifts be sent to those whom she wished to remember.

Now, as she watched the whirling flakes of snow, she thought how lovely it would be to see the big room full of gaily tied packages, waiting to be sent on their various ways. Regretfully she pictured the disappointment of relatives and friends who would think she had forgotten; they would never dream she had grown too poor to buy Christmas gifts; they all believed her wealthy.

With a heavy sigh she looked around the beautiful living room. The furnishings were luxurious; many of them had been in the family for generations. . . . Suddenly a cry came from her lips. She had thought of a quick, sure way to fulfill her desires. She would sell a few of the lovely old pieces. She would send for the proprietor of the antique shop without a moment's delay! Her Christmas gifts would be on their way tomorrow!—Katherine Edelman

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MANY TYPES OF HOLLY

HOLLY, so popular as a Christmas decoration, is most abundant along the bottom lands of eastern Texas and southern Arkansas. There are about 175 species of holly found throughout the world, the largest being the American holly which attains a height of 50 feet. The red-berried holly is most common, although some species bear yellow berries and others black.

Ancient German Christmas: Belief Germans of ancient times believed that crumbs of bread made at Christmas, and which fell on the ground, would grow into little star flowers with miraculous healing powers.

Santa Claus as Usual "Santa Claus is comin' around as usual in December," said Uncle Eben, "tryin' to bring along enough good cheer to beat de tax collector."

Non-Christians and Christmas Non-Christians frequently join in the social observance of the day. To them, it simply has no religious significance.

Christmas Cards Old Custom The sending of Christmas cards by way of friendly greeting and remembrance has grown up since about 1800.

Christmas Puddings Made Round Christmas puddings are made round so that they may go round.

From Our Early Files

Items From the Democrat of December 3, 1896

Mrs. Parks of Morganton is stopping with her daughter, Mrs. Edgar Coffey.

Many of the colored population are taking leave of our county and going to Jellico, the haven of peace, and plenty for the colored race. May their helira be for the best good of them all.

Messrs. T. F. Coffey and G. W. Council have purchased a heavy steam saw mill, which will be delivered here this week and located in the fine forest of Rev. J. G. Pulliam on Howard's Creek. Mr. J. R. Hagaman, an experienced sawyer, will run the mill.

The Negro, Pat Mitchell, who attempted to rape the six-year-old daughter of Mr. John Eggers of Zionville a few days ago, was lodged in jail here Wednesday evening, being arrested at Johnson City, Tenn. He has confessed the heinous crime, and it seems that his chances for pulling hemp are very good. It is best for the law to take its course in such cases, and it is hard to control the enraged people, Mitchell says—he is guilty of the charge but wants a fair trial. He has some fear of lynchers, but we hope this will not occur.

Mr. A. E. Davis, died at his home near Todd, this county, Monday afternoon. He had been in ill health for some time, and five days ago, while getting out of his saddle, his foot became fastened in the stirrup, his mule frightened and ran, dragging him some distance, from which he received injuries which caused his death.

The Wadesboro Messenger gives it out as a fact that Col. O. H. Dockery will prove a factor in the senatorial fight before the Legislature in January.

December 10, 1896

We are sorry to learn that friend Asa Wilson was badly hurt last Friday by the kick of a mule.

Uncle Dave Adams gave us a call this week and said he had eaten perfectly ripe apples from the second crop in his orchard this year. This strikes us as something very remarkable.

Prof. W. L. Nicholson, of Wilkesboro, opened school at Valle Crucis on Monday of this week, with a view of building a permanent school at that point. The present term will continue for ten months. Prof. Nicholson comes to our county highly recommended as an educator and we predict for him splendid success.

Our esteemed hotelist, W. L. Bryan, has sold his hotel property to a Richmond firm. The traveling public will, after Mr. Bryan retires, miss the fine accommodations and unusual kindness they received there. We are not informed as to when the property will change hands.

About a month ago, Mr. L. M. Waters lost his mountain barn by fire, and on last Thursday night, the incendiary torch was applied to his home barn and it, with its contents, was destroyed. It contained one fine mule, 5 head of blooded cattle, about 200 bushels of corn, 4 tons of hay besides harness, farming implements, etc. Mr. Waters had Aaron, Isaac and Thurman Church arrested as the guilty parties, and their trial came off yesterday at Gp Creek, but we have not heard from it.

One of the most horrible accidents known to our community for many years was the sad death of John Ayers on last Friday. He, with two other men, was falling timber on the Winkler farm, two miles east of Boone, when a tree caught him, mashing him in the earth and mauling his body most fearfully. The tree was on his body some minutes before it could be moved, and strange to say, he talked sensibly as soon as he was released. On examination it was found that one leg was broken

Chicago Business Near Year's Peak, Observe Traders

Chicago—Chicago retail business last week was almost at the year's peak, according to observers of the Chicago Association of Commerce. The best Christmas buying season since 1930 is indicated, they say. Special sales kept all of the department stores going at top speed with consumer purchases, in some instances, making a new 1935 record.

In like fashion, wholesalers enjoyed another good week. Orders for holiday wares continue heavy, as do those for seasonal clothing, household wares and other essentials. Mail order companies also report heavy demands.

Industrially, the city shows a steady upward climb. With greater activity in the steel mill area and other manufacturers busier, wages and personnel are gradually increasing.

The influx of thousands of early arrivals for the International Live Stock Exposition also contributed to the bright picture. Heavier hotel occupancies, paralleled by the appearance of the visitors in department stores, theaters, restaurants and other local establishments have opened temporary jobs for hundreds of local workers.

Public utilities benefited by the new cold spell.

Fifty seven agricultural college students at the University of Georgia are living in barns and a canning plant.

A cart no larger than a portable typewriter, but weighing 200 pounds transports the University of Minnesota's supply of radium. It is covered with lead, copper and chromium.

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