

## A Scene Beyond The Horizon

(Continued from Page 1, Section 1)  
gumma, cigaretta per Pa-pa."

I had seen the stub sticking from under her clothing, and being able to speak a few words of the Italian language, I turned and asked her how she lost her arm.

"Aeroplano, Americano boom, boom!" she said with a cute smile.

Then Doc asked her name. "Antonyetta," she answered, bowing politely and twisting about; more I would think to keep warm than to make an impression.

That was when it happened. That was when our "grappa" became deeply entangled with Doc's generosity, and as he staggered against me, he said, "I'm gonna give her ten dollars for Christmas, 'cause we might have dropped that bomb." Then suggesting that I take good care of the bottles, he handed me his quart of "grappa," fished out his wallet, and gave Antonyetta 1,000 lire notes (ten dollars).

I shall never forget the expression of profound happiness that decorated that slim but pretty face. Her eyes were wide in bewilderment, as if she

had been given a small fortune not knowing from where it had come, and she was laughing aloud and crying at the same time. At first she started to run, then abruptly turned and seizing Doc by the arm, she almost shouted, "Amico, Amico." And in Italian she insisted that we accompany her to her home.

Doc looked at me and I looked at the bottles; then apparently with the same thought in mind (a warm place to drink), we shrugged our shoulders and gestured for Antonyetta to lead the way.

We had walked but a short distance when the little girl stopped before a hole in a shrapnel riddled wall. "La cassa mio," she said with a polite bow, and motioned for us to follow her inside.

The would-be door led into a small room with a low ceiling that, like the floor and walls, was constructed of a mud-like substance. The furniture consisted of two beds, a shabby chair and an antique-like dresser with a broken mirror. There were no windows, rugs or decorations, except for a picture of Christ in His in-

fancy that sat behind a smoked oil lamp on the dresser.

Antonyetta pulled back a dingy colored curtain and we passed into what was supposed to be a combination kitchen, dining room and a living room. In the middle of the room was a table with no cloth, and two of the four shabby chairs around it were occupied by a middle-aged man and woman, who arose and bowed politely, jabbering in the Italian tongue. In the corner was a small stand that supported a burning lamp with a broken globe that was giving the only light for the room and adding greatly to the unpleasant odors. And in another corner a rock structure was built up for what I presumed to be a stove. However, the only heat was a pan of coals and ashes that sat beneath the table.

As the bearded man pulled back the chairs and motioned for us to be seated at the table, the lady took two chipped glasses from a box-like contraption that sat beside the door, and by the time Doc and I were seated, the glasses and a half cake of smelly cheese was sitting before us.

It was not until now that Antonyetta introduced us to her parents. Joseppi was the father, and I cannot remember the mother's name. Then she proudly presented the ten bucks that Doc had given her. Joseppi danced gleefully around the table slapping us on the back, causing us to almost spill the "grappa" that we had already poured into the chipped glasses, and the mother was sobbing, "Gratzi, gratzi," meaning "Thank you, thank you." Doc and I were busy consuming our "grappa," so we did not bother to join them in their happy celebration.

After a supper of "Zuppi de Italian," we left the happy little family. And we, too, were happy, for we had but half a quart of "grappa" to carry. The rest being inside us blending nicely with our peace of mind to cause us to be pleased with the whole world.

The next day, Christmas day, we pried into our Christmas packages that we had received from America, and filled our canvas field bags with candy, cakes and gum and other eats. Then after scouting around camp long enough to find another bottle of "grappa," we went to see Antonyetta and her parents.

Again we saw a happy trio, ragged and dirty, hungry and poor, but nevertheless, cheerful. Proudly Joseppi sat three glasses and a quart of dago red vino on the table, and we were off again—celebrating the birthday of Christ in the wrong way—celebrating to amuse ourselves. Joseppi, too, was celebrating, but not to amuse himself so much as to make us, his American friends, more happy and feel more at home. And Antonyetta was there, she was not drinking, not even talking; but busily eating the sweets that we had brought her. The mother just sat at the end of the table smiling happily as she and Joseppi carried on conversation in Italian. We did not know or care about what or whom they were talking, for Doc and I were enjoying ourselves, chasing our "grappa" with Joseppi's dago red vino.

Five years ago we made three Italian people happy with ten dollars and a bit of food. That was not much. No, it was not much, but it was enough to make three everlasting friends who opened their doors, their hearts and their all to us.

In the months to come we visited Antonyetta and her family regular-

ly, and there was always wine, shelter, cheerfulness and, when they had it, there was food. It seemed as if these three people could not be satisfied in doing all that was humanly possible for them to do for us, and it seemed that they could not show enough appreciation for our small gifts to please themselves. They were grateful and happy to receive the little things, that no matter how long Doc and I might live, we will never miss. And even now, as I look out into the foggy mists, I can see them then. And in the midst of my thoughts, and from the very depths of my heart, I hope that this Christmas they will be surrounded by an air of even more happiness.

Yes, I can see far beyond the horizon. And I can see more than memory alone. I can see the bitter truth. We, who have every reason in the world to be happy and thankful, for the things we have, show far less appreciation for big favors than the people of Europe, whose happiness can be given them for the price of a mere ten dollars, will show for a bite

to eat. Five years ago, three Italian people gave more thanks, and showed greater appreciation, to Doc Daugherty and I, for ten dollars and a handful of food than most people of America show to God for the first and the greatest Christmas gift that was ever given.

Yes, in my memory I can see a scene that is far beyond the horizon, not just a scene in Italy, but in France, Greece, Germany, and in every European country that has known the grim struggles of war. We in America do not know the hardships and the tortures of war as do the people of Europe. So let us show at least as much appreciation for our lives, our comfort, our food, clothing, shelter and amusement as do they for mere existence. This Christmas let us celebrate the birthday of the Son of God in a way of which He would approve, and let us strive to preserve the peace and the good will among the men of the earth, as on that first Christmas it

was intended. And let us open up our eyes and look upon a scene that is far beyond the horizon. A scene that I can see. A scene that you should see.

Lamps make oil-spots, and candles need snuffing; it is only the light of heaven that shines pure and leaves no stain. —Goethe.

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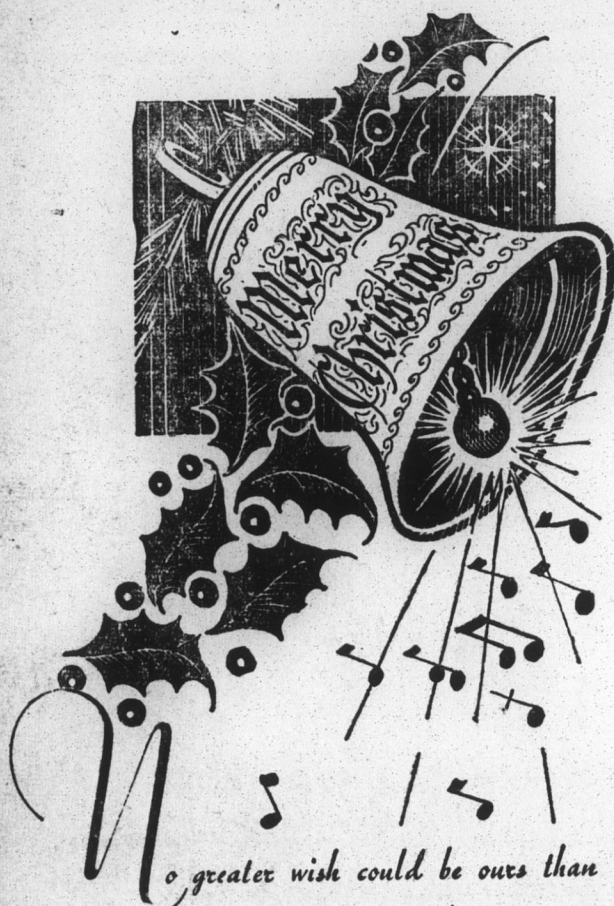
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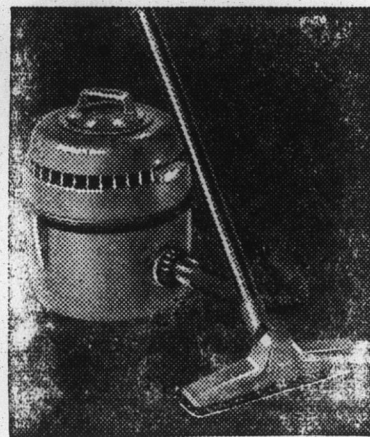
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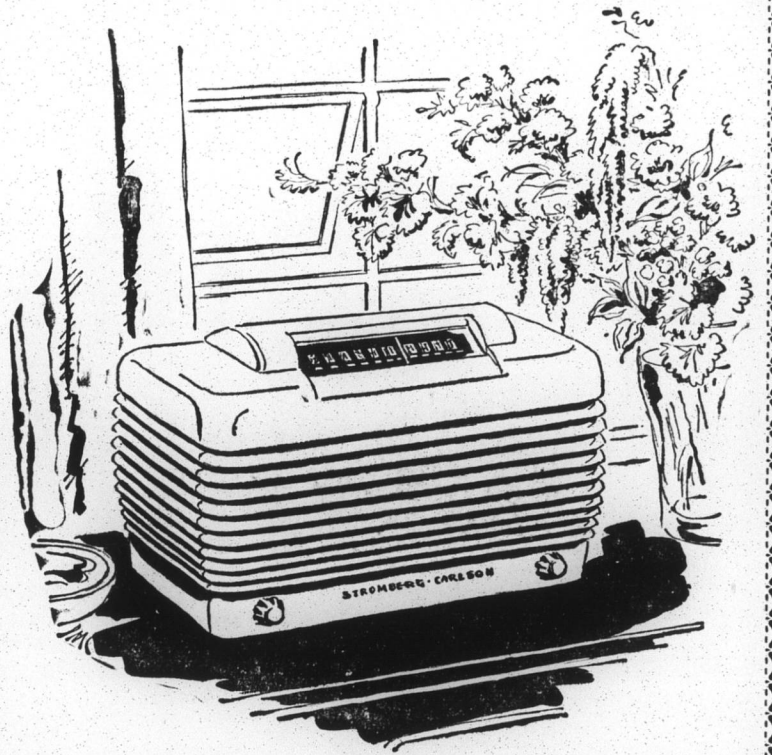
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