

THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

VOL. L

GRAHAM, N. C., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1924

NO. 46

Who Loves Santa Claus?

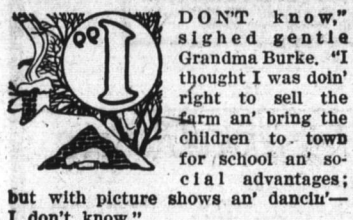


Illustration by Linford Wood

Grandma's Christmas

By Frank Herbert Sweet

© 1924, Western Newspaper Union.



DON'T know," sighed gentle Grandma Burke. "I thought I was doin' right to sell the farm an' bring the children to town for school an' social advantages; but with picture shows an' dancin'—I don't know."

She cleaned her wrinkled and capable hands from the dough and turned to see that the fire and kettle of melted lard were just right. They were. Then with deft, experienced fingers she began to drop twisted bits of dough into the hot lard, which in a few minutes changed them to crisp doughnuts. "Such appetites," she nodded to herself happily. "Sue an' Kate an' May are always just as hungry as Tom an' Win, or even big Sam who's grown up an' steadied down to regular work. Five will rush in from school, an' Sam later, an' all will grab up doughnuts. An' how they will eat!" She giggled reminiscently. "I do wish daughter Nell could have lived to see 'em grow up so, even May fourteen, an' her twin Win almost as big as his brother. Nell would have done better by 'em, of course, but I've done my best."



"I won't be a crosspatch the day before Christmas."

The hall door opened softly, and a fuzzy head and snapping eyes appeared. It was Rose Cady.

"What does my nose smell?" she questioned sniffing. "It tells me I'm

hungry. May I come in?"
"Of course, dear."
Rose shot in, one hand outstretched. "May I?" she begged.
"All you can carry," beamed Grandma. "They're just right to eat now, while hot. I wonder why the children—"

The key turned, and a few moments later the sound of strained and heavy steps passed through the front doorway and into the parlor.
"Gettin' ready for a dance, an' that's the Smith music box they're bringin' in. Likely they're up to a lot of 'deco

ratin', an' ain't give a thought to Christmas comin'. I wish—no, they're just high-spirited young folks makin' ready for a good time. That's all."
But in spite of herself there was a shadow on Grandma's face the rest of the day. She had hoped for a big surprise Christmas dinner, all to themselves, with no intruders.
She mixed and baked until after midnight, then slipped through the side door to her room. She was awakened by a slight step.
"W-h-y, Grandma," reproved the merry voice of Kate. "Nine o'clock and you're still in bed. Not ill, are you?" with a sudden note of anxiety.
"No," apologized Grandma—"just overslept."
"All right. Merry Christmas! And come right into the hall when you're dressed. You may look now!"
Grandma rose hurriedly. She heard the voices of Rose and Jenny Cady, and even Ed's.
"Not even a family Christmas together," her thought deplored. "And here so early means a lot more fixin' for the dance. I'd like—for 'em to have a nice time, of course," she thought "finished loyally. "Young folks need pleasure."



A Christmas Hymn They Had Been Accustomed to Sing.

tomed to sing at home when she was a girl, and she had carried it on with her grandchildren. But she never had heard it in music.

In her eagerness she stepped to the parlor doorway, which was almost hidden in greenery. Suddenly two pairs of arms were inclosing her neck, and one pair belonged to Rose. Other arms were reaching for her; and beyond, hesitating Sam, who was too big to kiss anybody, lifted his arms.
"Why—why, my dears," murmured Grandma, looking bewildered.
"Look up," laughed Sue.
Grandma did, and there was a huge bunch of mistletoe over the door.
"Lead the queen to her throne and render homage," ordered Kate.
There was a raised chair decorated with holly and mistletoe, near one side of the fireplace. Grandma was conducted to it deferentially, then the ushers sank to their knees with grave faces but snapping eyes.
"Hail to the queen of love and the kitchen," they chanted, and Jenny

added, "including crisp doughnuts."
"Oh, my dears—my dears," softly.
"Now for the distribution of presents," cried May, springing up. Grandma had noticed round stockings along the fireplace, with an extra large one near her end, and sundry packages on the floor underneath.

The big stocking was laid on her lap, and packages began to follow. She recognized things she had wished, and books she had mentioned a desire to read. For Grandma, in spite of her perfect housekeeping, loved to read.

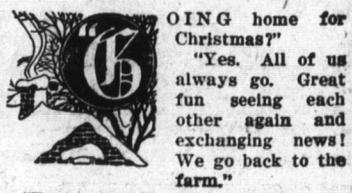
"I thought it was for a dance," she faltered, her hands caressing the gifts.

"O-o-oh, Grandma!" The idea! On this day! It's for all of us, but mostly you."
Rose and Jenny were dancing about, as pleased as any of the family. Grandma's tremulous hands reached out and drew them close.

"You must stay with us all day, dears," she urged happily—"and Bill, too. There's plenty an' to spare cooked. Christmas has begun so wonderful that you must help us carry it through."

For Mother's Christmas

By ETHEL COOK ELIOT
© 1924, Western Newspaper Union.



GOING home for Christmas?"
"Yes. All of us always go. Great fun seeing each other again and exchanging news! We go back to the farm."

"Yours must be quite a family now, with all the children. But I suppose your mother gets in extra help, and you all help, too."

It was not impertinent, because it was his best friend speaking. She was just frank and sincere. She had dropped into my office after hours, not to buy insurance from me (yes, I am a female insurance agent and not a failure at it either!) but to say "good-by" before herself leaving the city for the holidays.

"No, there's no extra help to be gotten these days in the country any more than here. Not any that's worth while. So mother does it all herself. But she likes it. Christmas only comes once a year."

We said no more about that, but after my friend had gone I remembered her clear, frank eyes and the way they had received my reply. They had been slightly skeptical. I couldn't get that skepticism out of my mind.

The result was that, after much thought, I suddenly closed office a whole week before Christmas, practically kidnaped my youngest sister away from her home in a nearby city—that comfortable home with its full nursery, cook and nurse girl—and whisked her away to the country to give mother a little surprise.



We Arrived in the Early Afternoon Without Warning.

front door, her arm linked in father's, dressed in her best silk, her white hair freshly curled, behind them the house shining in spotlessness. And then the pantry filled with pies, cakes, roast ham with its cloves, and mother's wonderful jelly tarts! Such an inviting, homelike, hospitable house! Such a sparklingly clean pantry full of good things!
How different today, six days before

we were expected! Father had hunched himself to the barn, and we found him disconsolately smoking by old Jim's stall. The house was chaos. All the rugs seemed to be up and the furniture out of place. Mother was cleaning!

"Oh, dear!" she greeted us. "I didn't expect you till Christmas Eve! Nothing's ready! I've just this hour started to fix for you."

We put down our suitcases in wonderment at this unheard-of welcome from mother, our mother!

"That's just it, mother, dear," I said. "We didn't want you to do all this 'fixing' alone. We've come to fix for ourselves, and the horde that follows on Christmas Eve."

Well, at first mother simply wouldn't hear of it. We were to be company and just wait till she got the rooms we were to occupy aired and made up. Since we were all there, well we must stay. But we shouldn't drudge. She guessed we worked hard enough, each at our own particular kind of work, all the year, not to have to work when we came home.

We wouldn't listen. We had come for one thing. We laughingly overbore her in all her objections.

More than that, we called father in from the barn and got him to bundle mother up and take her off for a sleigh ride. "A sleigh ride! Who ever heard of a sleigh ride and all the parlor furniture in the hall waiting for the parlor to be cleaned!" Well, mother heard of a sleigh ride, and under just those conditions now. She heard of it from her two strong-minded daughters, her youngest and her oldest. Father caught our spirit at once and bustled her away. How merrily the bells jingled as they whirled away through the snow!

Now for it! Marge and I tucked up our skirts, draped ourselves in big aprons and wound towels about our heads, and fell to. It was hard work, but what a lark we made of it. And we had a good supper waiting for mother and father when they got back. And every day that week we did the same. Father whisked mother off in the sleigh to visit old friends in nearby towns, or just for the ride. And while they were gone we hustled.

By Christmas Eve the house was as shining and tidy as it would have been had mother been left to herself with it. And Marge had proved herself a marvelous cook, too. There were pies and cakes, and even tarts, and the ham with cloves. The turkey was dressed, too, and the stuffing made. And mother had not so much as put her nose into the pantry door.

Then the family arrived. Three daughters, with their three husbands and several children apiece, and two brothers with their wives and offspring. And mother and father met them at the door, mother's arm



Father Whisked Mother Off in the Sleigh to Visit Friends.

tucked in father's, her hair freshly curled, her black silk rustling.

"My husband," cried Brother-in-law Jim, "you've lost ten years, mother! Such bright eyes and pink cheeks I've never seen."

Marge and I, in the darker background, nudged each other and giggled. All the others cried the same thing. It was true enough, too. This was a different mother from the rather weary old woman we were accustomed to meeting at holidays here in the open door.

Father spoke up: "You're dead right, children," he said. "Your mother looks like this all the year except at holiday time. Then she just slaves getting ready for you and sort of gets worn out. This year was different. This year she went honeymooning with me instead."

Marge and I came forth from hiding. "Yes, and hereafter is always to be different," we promised.
And how it paid! We'd gotten into the way of thinking mother was an old woman. Now we saw her as her neighbors and father saw her—hearty, bright-eyed, carolite.

caught it, and quicker than I, got up and ran around to mother at her place. There she leaned above her and gave her one of her old, impulsive, childish hugs. "Yes, mother dear, it's your own house. But you're our own mother. So 'twas fair!"

And everybody agreed that Marge had justified our high-handedness. However that may be, from Christmas to Christmas mother seems to be growing younger.

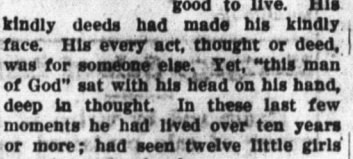
Well, another Christmas is here, and this insurance agent must get out her aprons. The other girls have offered to take their turns, of course, but I am too selfish to let them. I look forward to the annual cleaning spree with my jolly little sister, Marge, as to a jollification. And the best part of it all is the sound of those jingling sleighbells as mother and father go whisking out of the yard.
Heigh ho! Merry Christmas!



THE Christmas Reprimand

By Eleanor E. King

© 1924, Western Newspaper Union.



IF SO many years had not already swept over his head—sorrow, great worries, and time whitening his hair—one would have declared him too good to live. His kindly deeds had made his kindly face. His every act, thought or deed, was for someone else. Yet, "this man of God" sat with his head on his hand, deep in thought. In these last few moments he had lived over ten years or more; had seen twelve little girls grow to womanhood.

Mr. Baxter had taken a class from the beginners' department. Every Sunday these twelve little girls had been a delight as they sat listening with eager, attentive faces to the wonderfully interesting things they were told. All too soon came graduation from grammar school. The lessons had to go a little deeper for the high school students. The teacher was fully equal to the task. Finally college took its toll; until only three of his flock remained, and those few left in the fall to start their college career.

Mrs. Baxter came in, interrupting his reverie. "Ellen," he began, "I often think I had such joy in teaching those girls; I wonder if I did right in keeping them under one teacher so long. I suggested that I turn them over to some woman to teach; I



Why B. B., This is No Time to Worry About That.

thought she might understand their needs better but somehow I couldn't get up much enthusiasm about it."

"Why, B. B.," protested his wife, "this is no time to worry about that." "I feel rather responsible for the girls, and the attitude they may take. I hope they haven't been influenced too strongly by me."

"B. B., you are in a bad frame of mind tonight," interposed Mrs. Baxter, sitting down, on the arm of his chair, patting his head. "Don't you know that most people are too busy tonight getting ready for the Christmas festivities to be mooning over past history? You know we have to get the box ready—"

"Oh, yes," broke in "B. B." "That two pounds of pecans I promised to take down the street, Ellen; I will go right away."
The doorbell rang vigorously, three times. "B. B." hastened to the door. "If it isn't my first lieutenant—a pet name he had for a member of his class. "Won't you come up."
"No, thank you, Mr. Baxter, I can't right now. The girls are planning a class reunion while they are home for the Christmas holidays. They want to know if they can't count on their

Hello! Anybody Home?



teacher for one of those hounding lessons—like they used to have before we were scattered to the four winds."

"B. B.," surprised, dazed and happy all in the same breath, just chuckled the way he always did when some-



Here is Something to Sneak Upstairs With You.

thing pleased him unusually. "You surely can count on me," was all he could say.

His first lieutenant came closer, pretending to whisper. "Now, don't let your wife know about this," and she slipped a box into his hand—"here is something to sneak upstairs with you, Merry Christmas!"

"B. B." stood dumfounded, alternately shaking, turning, rattling, smelling and fondling the box; he took it upstairs. He dropped into a chair. This was the first time any of his girls had remembered him on Christmas, beyond a card, through all these years. He had always made it a point to tend to all graduations and Christmases. The girls had appreciated it. This was the first time, but he hastened to tell himself, it was quite all right—he had never expected it to be otherwise.

Unwrapping the tissue paper, the box disclosed a leather bill-fold with a hand-tooled design. "Ellen," he shouted in his happiness. "See what my first lieutenant made with her own hands for me. The card on it says:

"Just an attempt to show a wee part of my great appreciation for the wonderful work you have done in teaching our class.

YOUR FIRST LIEUTENANT."

His Reward
"Howdy, Tobe!" saluted an acquaintance from Slippery Slap. "How'd you come out in that poker game tuther night?"
"I didn't get no money, Newt," replied Tobe Sagg of Sandy Mush, "but great gosh, look at the experience I had!"—Kansas City Times.

Back Number
Grandma—Do you want to hear the story of "Puss in Boots?"
Elsie—No, gran'ma. No one wears 'em now. Tell me about "Puss in Black Silk Slippers and Galoshes."—Boston Globe.

A Christmas Greeting

By W. E. GILROY
in The Congregationalist

THERE'S not a memory of home, of friend, Be they so far remote, however sorrow,
No place where new affections richly blend
That does not grow more beautiful more holy.
At Christmas.

There is no laughter of a little child, No fiery passion of Youth's rosy morning,
No treasure-house of Age, benign and mild,
That is not sweeter for the Christ's adorning.
At Christmas.

There is no depth of love, no pang of sorrow,
No mighty moving in the human heart,
No comfort for today, hope for tomorrow,
In which the Christ has not a larger part.
At Christmas.

So, as we send our greeting of affection, We share the memory of Him who came;
In fellowship, in happy recollection, Each fervent wish is hallowed in His name.
At Christmas.

CHRISTMAS

CHRISt was born at Bethlehem that he might die at Calvary. This is the message and meaning of Christmas. Socrates supposed and Plato philosophized and the world's great ones dreamed that mental process could save humanity. But Jesus came to save us from the evil that dwells in us, and in the unexplored field of redemption his mission was new and solitary. The sublimity of Christ's career is measured by the volume and depth of human guilt.—Herald and Presbyterian.

Throw Hats at Candidates

The word "hetman" is a title given to the commander-in-chief of the Cossacks, annually chosen from among their number. The process of selection offers a contrast to the American custom of figuratively throwing one's hat in the ring as a sign of willingness to accept the nomination to office. Among the Cossacks it was the custom while in assembly to throw their fur caps at the candidates for whom they voted, and the one receiving the greatest number was declared elected.—Baltimore Sun.

Pay Attention to Values

The man who insists on full value for his dollar generally accumulates wealth. If more attention were given to values, more men would get rich. The relation of price to value is the most important study in economics.—Grit.