



### THE CHRIST CHILD'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

By MAY G. RINGWOLT.

HE, with her sweet young enthusiasm, told them of the first Christmas—of the Christ Child cradled in the manger because there was no room for the shepherds watching their flocks by night.

Clarice's face was rapt; her eyes shone. Of all the teachers in the Sunday-school, none was so lovely as our own Miss Maud. She was certain at the Christmas angels had the same shining yellow hair. Did they

to Him. Not far away is a great hospital for little children who have crippled legs and arms, and poor, crooked backs, sick children who can't run and play, but have to hobble about on crutches or lie in bed all day. Wouldn't you like to make their Christmas so happy that they'd forget their pain?"

Her smile gathered up their eager nods of assent, as a golden thread gathering pearls. "I knew you would. Well, I'm going to tell you a secret." She leaned confidentially near. "The day before Christmas we're to have a dear little service down here, and over there on the platform will be an empty manger, and, as we sing our Christmas carols, we are going to march up to the manger and each put in a gift for some little Christ child at the hospital. Won't we have a jolly time deciding what to bring! Why, it will be almost as exciting as if every girl of you were playing Santa Claus!"

Again Clarice's smiling face was clouded by a frown, and one rude elbow poked at the new scholar's arm. "Clarice!" exclaimed Miss Maud, severely.

"She's crowding me!" defended a sulky voice.

Miss Maud looked up at the little brown figure shrinking back into a corner. The child's eyes were luminous; her face flushed, her lips parted. "Agnes was so intensely listening to me that I'm sure she didn't realize that she was leaning against anyone. I'm surprised at you, Clarice!" A check hid its shamed crimson in the soft muff. To have Miss Maud "surprised" at you was something itself! Her tears wet the violets. It was all Agnes' fault. She would never forgive her—never!

And when Sunday-school was over and Agnes, with a timid smile, asked if she might walk up the street with Clarice, that unkind little girl slipped her arm through that of her chum, Anabel, and, whispering and giggling, stalked by Agnes without a word.

The tears came into Agnes' eyes, for mother would not let her play with the little girls in the new neighborhood into which they had moved, because the children there were rough and boisterous, and used naughty words, and she was very lonely. But she was a brave little soul, and dash-

ing away the tears, she was soon skipping along in the sunshine, thinking what a lucky girl she was to have two lively legs, and a straight, strong back.

Agnes remembered the time, before dear father's death, when they lived in a cunning cottage of their own on a pretty avenue, but now mother and she had only one room at the top of a gloomy house on a forlorn back street. Still, as her feet clattered up the dark, uncarpeted stairs, her heart was full of happiness because she had reached home at last—for even one room is home when mother is there.

"Oh, mother," exclaimed Agnes, "I've so much to tell you!" And cuddled in mother's lap, an arm about her neck, a hand patting her cheek, Agnes sweetly prattled the Christ Child of old, and how His birthday was to be kept by giving presents to poor, sick little children left in His place. "And, mother," she cried, "I'm going to give a doll just like my own dear Peggy! Do you think, mother dear—if I sewed, too, you know—you could get the dollie dressed in time?"

The smile faded from mother's lips, and the arm about her girl's neck trembled. "My dear little Agnes," she murmured, with a catch in her voice, "mother is so sorry to disappoint you." She paused, then bravely went on. "Agnes has grown to be such a little woman that mother is going to explain everything to her. You know, dear, for three whole weeks mother had no work to do."

"Yes," chimed in Agnes, gaily, "and it was just beautiful! We took long walks, and, in the evening, instead of the stupid sewing, you told us the loveliest stories."

"But, love," explained mother, with a sad smile, "when there is no work there is no pay—no money to buy anything to eat nor coal to keep us warm."

"We ate every day, though, mother dear, and most generally always we had a fire."

"Yes, dear, because a kind man let us have all that we needed, and trusted mother to pay for it when she got work again. So, you see, Agnes, the money that mother is making now does not really belong to us, but every cent must go to pay our debts."

A small head solemnly nodded.

"It hurts mother very much not to give her darling any Christmas toys nor let her girl's kind heart have its wish about the dollie for the poor sick little child at the hospital, but Agnes will try to be a good little girl about it, won't she?"

The arms about mother's neck tightened their hold, but Agnes' mouth twitched, and she had to blink very hard to keep back the tears. If she had no present to lay in the Christmas manger, how would the Christ Child know that she loved Him? "Of course," she argued to herself, "I could explain in my prayers that I had nothing to give."

But had she nothing? Her face suddenly crimsoned, and a great lump choked her little throat. There was Peggy herself!

Without speaking, she got down from mother's lap, and dashed across the room to her little bed. There, propped up by a pillow, sat Peggy in a stiff pink calico dress. The curls had all been combed out of Peggy's straggling hair; the roses had long ago faded from her cheeks, and in a sad canted Perry had parted company with the end of her nose.

"You dear!" whispered Agnes. Her lips formed a determined line. How could she have thought of giving Peggy up! What would she do all day without a dollie to play with? What would she do at night without a dollie to sleep on the pillow beside her? But how disappointed her sick little girl at the hospital would be Christmas morning when all the other children had lovely presents, and she found that she had been left out! Agnes stooped over the bed, gathered Peggy in her arms, and pressed her to her aching heart.

It was the day before Christmas, and the children had sung all but their last carol which they were to sing as they marched to the manger and laid down their gifts one by one. The door softly opened, and a little brown shadow of a girl with a small pink object hugged to her breast

### THE ANGEL AND THE SHEPHERDS.



Albert Eidefelt.

slipped timidly in. For a moment Agnes stood dazed, as if she had suddenly entered fairyland, for the bare walls of the room were festooned with heavy ropes of Christmas greens, the shades at the windows were drawn, and all the chandeliers brilliantly lighted, while above the awaiting manger shone a glorious electric star. Then, ashamed of being so late, she hurriedly tiptoed to her place, the vacant seat beside Clarice.

Clarice met her with a cold stare, but the gaze of Agnes' eyes never reached the unkind little girl's face, for it rested in fascinated awe upon a vision of beauty in Clarice's arms. It was a doll such as fairies might dream of. She had dark, clustering curls, and magnificent brown eyes. Her cheeks glowed with color, and there was the cunningest dimple in her round chin. She was dressed in claret velvet trimmed in white silk, and wore a claret velvet poke bonnet with white silk strings and an exquisite white plume gracefully touching the brown curls on the right side. And best of all, and gold bead bracelets dangled over her hands.

"Oh," murmured Agnes, "won't your little hospital girl be pleased?"

"My little hospital girl!" scornfully whispered back Clarice. "You don't suppose I'd give my best doll away! Here's my present!"—she held out a box of jack-straws—"Lady Lucille and I simply stopped in." She airily tossed her head. "We're on our way to a Christmas Eve party."



### HANGING THE STOCKING.

"Form in line, my dears," interrupted Miss Maud, briskly. "Yes, our class comes last, but you must sing all the time we're marching."

The children's voices carried joyously as the procession pressed forward, but one little singer was mute. She was the last in the line, a little brown shadow of a girl with a small pink object hugged to her breast. Miss Maud stood by the manger, now heaped with all sorts of playthings, and nodded and smiled as each member of her class approached. Puzzled, she watched Agnes pause, look at the manger with frightened eyes, and hesitate. Then she saw the small pink object lifted to the child's lips, and heard the sound of a smacking kiss of farewell before trembling hands laid a doll with straggly hair, faded cheeks and a broken nose among the new toys.

"Why, my dear," cried Miss Maud, putting her arms about Agnes, "what is the matter?"

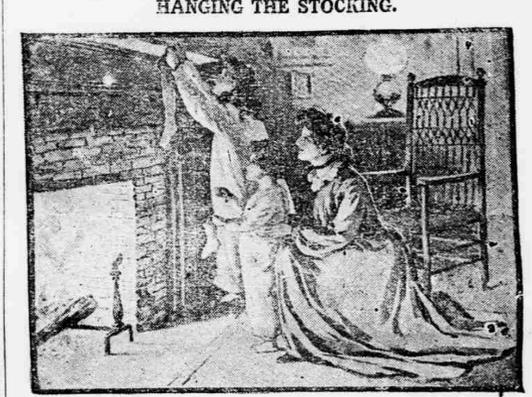
A great sob shook the tiny figure. "Tell me all about it," comforted Miss Maud.

And Agnes brokenly confided the whole story. But as she explained how mother's money belonged to somebody else, and how she had nothing to give the Christ Child except her only doll, neither of them noticed a little listener who drew nearer and nearer.

"No, no," cried Agnes, "I wouldn't take her back. I want the little hospital girl to have her—she'll 'preciate Peggy's crippled nose, won't she?" Agnes forced a smile through her tears. "Only," she faltered, "it will be so—so lonesome without any doll—"

Something tugged at Miss Maud's skirts. She turned, and with a start of surprise, looked down into Clarice's eager face.

"I've lots more at home, you know," she whispered. And, laying Lady Lucille in Agnes' astonished arms, Clarice ran after her chum, Anabel.—The Interior.



the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

For Family of Two.

Oyster Soup, Gherkins, Roast Duck, Apple and Celery Salad, Potatoes, Scalloped, with Grated Onion, Squash, Plum Pudding, Hard Sauce, Tangerine Oranges, Grapes, Coffee.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.

### PANAMA EXPLOSION

#### Results in a Number of People Losing Their Lives

### SCENES OF GREAT EXCITEMENT

#### Premature Explosion of an Enormous Elast of Powder Near Colon Claims Ten Dead and Fifty Injured.

Colon, By Cable.—A giant blast of dynamite, already prepared for firing, was prematurely exploded in the workings at Bas Obispo Saturday. Ten men were killed and fifty injured. It may be that others have been killed, for debris is piled up in all directions.

Bas Obispo cut is about 30 miles from Colon, and the shock of the explosion was distinctly felt here, as in addition to that in the blast, 22 tons of dynamite was exploded.

Numerous reports are current as to the cause of the accident but the official version from Culebra, which gives an estimate of ten killed and fifty wounded, states that during the loading of the last hole of the blast the dynamite in this cutting was discharged, and the remaining 22 tons were exploded by concussion.

The blast had not been connected electrically as the discharge of the blast was set for 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The last hole was being cased under the supervision of one of the most efficient powder men in the employ of the commission.

A passenger train had just passed when the explosion occurred, but it was not in any way damaged.

The majority of the victims are penitents.

Relief trains were sent to the scene of the disaster and one which returned here several hours later brought back the report that 45 of the injured had been sent to Anson Hospital.

The officials on the train stated that eleven dead had been found while many others in the camp of 120 who were employed in the cut were missing.

It was also reported by the trainmen that the explosion was due to a passing steam shovel, which broke the wire leading to the immense charge of dynamite. Whether or not this was the cause of the accident, a steam shovel and crew, which happened to be on the scene were practically buried under the mass of rocks and earth thrown up.

Gangs were seen searching for the dead and assisting the wounded. Electric lights were set up and at night steam shovels were at work removing the tons upon tons of debris. Many of the men have been seriously injured, some of them probably fatally.

Tradition has it that the Panama Railroad cost one human life for every tie, what with accidents, insurrections and disease, and the construction of the canal has not gone along without exacting its toll.

There have been a number of accidents in the last two years, chief among which was the premature explosion of dynamite at Pedro Miguel in June, 1907, which resulted in the death of seven men and the injury of a number of others.

### THE WORK OF CONGRESS

#### Congressional Summary.

The business of both houses of Congress was confined largely to listening to the reading of the President's annual message but in addition a few bills were introduced both in the Senate and the House and in the House a number of bills were sent to conference, among them being one providing for a new immigration station in Boston.

In addition, the Speaker announced the appointment of Mr. Higgins, of Connecticut, to a place on the committee on the judiciary, in place of Mr. Littlefield and of Mr. Martin to a place on the committee on Indian affairs in place of Mr. Parker, deceased.

For the first time during the present Congress there was a call of the committees of the House but no measure was reported by any of them.

The miscellaneous work of the Senate consisted in the main of the reference in executive session of about 1,500 recess nominations, which were sent to the Senate by the President, and the adoption of resolutions of regret on account of the death of members of the House who have passed away since the adjournment last May. The Senate adjourned for the day at 2 o'clock and the House at 2:35.

#### Census Bill Passed.

For nearly five hours the House of Representatives considered the bill providing for the taking of the thirtieth and subsequent decennial censuses, and passed it without material change. From the very outset of the debate it became evident that the progress of the measure toward passage would be impeded.

#### Pensions in Senate.

The session of the Senate was chiefly devoted to the formal presentation of departmental reports and the introduction of bills. The reports have been made public from time to time and the bills numbering 352 were chiefly for the granting of pensions.

#### Saturday's Session.

The House of Representatives Saturday was in its old-time form. No particular programme had been mapped out, but under a call of committee several measures in which the members were especially interested, and in some cases vitally concerned, were considered. With few exceptions they engendered the liveliest sort of debate, and it was disclosed that the forces for or against them were fully lined up for the fray.

Parliamentary tactics were freely resorted to, with the result that five times the roll was called.

The first struggle occurred on a resolution fixing the boundary line between the States of Colorado, Oklahoma and New Mexico, which was agreed to by a majority but not without two roll calls. The House then by a decisive vote refused to further consider the bill providing for arbitrary settlement of disputes between employers and employees.

Next turning attention to the bill providing for the protection of aliens in the United States the subject was threshed out at length. The measure had rough sailing and it was passed by a slim majority after the roll had been called twice.

#### Mr. and Mrs. Taft Given Reception.

Washington, Special.—President-elect and Mrs. William H. Taft were tendered a reception by Miss Mabel Boardman, a Washington society leader, at her home on Dupont circle. The function was one of the most notable of the season, and among the guest were a large number of the representative persons of the Capital's official, diplomatic and social circles.

#### The Evacuation of Cuba.

Washington, Special.—At the War Department the first details regarding the withdrawal from Cuba of the American army of pacification, which has been on duty there since the fall of 1906, were made known. The movements of the troops will begin on January 1st and will be completed by April 1st.

#### Killed by Electric Shock.

Yorkville, Special.—Mr. W. F. Downs, a native of Fort Mill, and for the past three or four years head machinist at the Tavora Cotton Mill at this place, was instantly killed by an electrical current. The electrical current which is furnished by the Southern Power Company, had failed and Superintendent Ramseur and Mr. Downs were searching for the trouble. The switch had been opened and Downs placed his hand on a wire he supposed dead but it proved not to be and he fell back lifeless.

#### Thomas F. Ryan Gives \$1,000 to Uncle Remus Fund.

Atlanta, Ga., Special.—J. G. Lester, secretary of the "Uncle Remus" memorial association, announced the receipt of a contribution of \$1,000 from Thomas F. Ryan, of New York, to the fund of perpetuating the memory of Joel Chandler Harris. Mr. Ryan was tendered and has accepted the vice presidency of the association.

#### Ohio Congressman Criticized.

Wooster, O., Special.—The man found unconscious in the chair car of a Pennsylvania westbound train here Sunday and taken to a local hospital was later identified as Congressman Grant E. Messer, of the Marion, O., district. Physicians declare he is suffering from uremic poisoning and acute congestion of the kidneys.

#### Mail Carrier Badly Hurt.

Spartanburg, Special.—Jesse L. Wood, a well known letter carrier, was thrown from his buggy early Sunday morning and seriously injured. The horse Mr. Wood was driving took fright on east Main street, just in front of the First Presbyterian church. He was thrown violently to the sidewalk and knocked unconscious. When taken to his home it was discovered that three of his ribs had been broken and one of his shoulders terribly injured. He is threatened with pneumonia, which makes his condition trebly worse.

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### DUTCH SEIZE VESSEL

#### Venezuelan Ship Towed into Port

### PRILE CARRIED DUTCH FLAG

#### The Gelderland Steams Into the Harbor of Williamstad Towing the Venezuelan Coastguard Ship Alex Flying the Dutch Flag and Sporting a Dutch Crew.

Willemsstad, Island of Curacao, Special.—The Dutch cruiser Gelderland came into this port Sunday morning towing the Venezuelan coastguard ship Alex with the Dutch flag flying and a Dutch crew on board. The Gelderland captured the Alex off Puerto Cabello on Saturday. At that time the Alex was lying close in shore and notwithstanding the threat which the Venezuelan government had made to fire upon any of the Dutch warships committing a hostile act, the Gelderland steamed at full speed towards the guardship and sent an officer and guard in a launch to seize her. No shots came from the Alex on land.

The crew of the Alex was put ashore and the Dutch officer and marines remained on board, the Gelderland finally taking the Alex in tow and steaming away with her prize.

The seizure of the Alex was in accordance with the plans of the Holland government when instructions were issued to the three Dutch warships now in these waters to make a demonstration off the coast of Venezuela and to capture any Venezuelan ships of war of guard vessels that they might find.

The people of Curacao are greatly rejoiced. The Governor of Curacao said:

"The capture of our warships of coast guards and war vessels is not to be considered an unfriendly act against the Venezuelans. It is merely a reprisal against Castro's government which refuses to give satisfaction for his unfriendly acts toward Holland."

It is learned from the officers of the Gelderland that the battleship Jacob Van Hemsterk and the cruiser Friesland are now off La Guayra and that further captures may be expected at any time.

#### Taft's View of McKinley.

New York, Special.—President-elect William H. Taft, speaking Sunday night at the dedication of a McKinley memorial organ in Metropolitan Temple, told to the audience the story of his official association with the late President, and declared with reference to the Philippine Islands that the policy laid down by Mr. McKinley in 1898 had been the policy of the present as it will be the policy of his own administration in the White House. Mr. Taft will remain here until Thursday, when he leaves for Augusta, Ga., to spend the five weeks preceding his proposed departure to the Panama canal.

#### American Railway Company Asks For a Charter.

Hawkinsville, Ga., Special.—Charter was applied for by a local attorney on behalf of interested parties for a charter for "The American Railway Company," which proposes building a line from Abbeville, Ga., to Winchester, in Macon county, Ga., via Hawkinsville and Grovania. The proposed road will traverse one of the richest farming sections of the State. It will tap the Seaboard at Abbeville and the Gulf line at Hawkinsville. Work will begin at once, it is stated.

#### 1908 Cotton Crop.

Washington, Special.—The crop reporting board of the bureau of statistics of the Department of Agriculture has estimated from reports of correspondence agents of the bureau that the total production of cotton in the United States for the year 1908-9 would amount to 6,182,970,000 pounds.

#### England Rushes More Troops to India.

London, By Cable.—Another heavy draft on English home regiments for service in India was ordered by the war office. The troops will be ready to embark for India as soon as possible as the threatened Indian uprising is believed to be imminent. Friday's draft with the heavy reinforcements that started for India last Wednesday, has reduced many of the home battalions to mere skeletons and an additional call for recruits will soon be made.

#### Wife of Millionaire is Arrested For Shoplifting.

New York, Special.—Mrs. Louis J. Schloss, wife of the well known New York and Baltimore clothier, was arrested here last week for shoplifting. Different articles she had picked up amounted to about \$16. She pleads nervousness and ill health. The case will be heard soon.