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Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor:

Dr. Martin Luther King was an outstanding Negro leader and I am proud to put something in the paper in honor of him. We all know the things he did for the black people were good and we never forget his birthday. Just as he has said: If we are children of God we all join hands one of these days and that means to love white like we love black and not have prejudice in our hearts for one another.

Mrs. Charlotte Barnett



The first beaver hat to appear in London caused such a disturbance the wearer was arrested.

Additions To Gallon Club

The Yancey Unit of the Mayland Chapter of the American Red Cross proudly announces, with gratitude, the following additions to its Gallon Club:

James E. Gardner is elevated to membership in the Two Gallon group and Robert V. Hoilman has qualified for enrollment in the One Gallon group.

Readers who have abided the meanderings of this column over a period of time may recall that I recently asked for information about the observance of Old Christmas in the Southern Appalachians.

There were no such responses prior to the conventional Christmas vacation, and I had about decided that January 6 now means little more than a day when the December 25 trappings are put away for another year.

But in the After-Christmas mail there appeared a letter

Folk Ways and Folk Speech

of SOUTHERN APPALACHIA with Rogers Whitener



Send your suggestions for column material to Rogers Whitener, Box 376, Boone, N. C. 28607.

and an enclosure from Roy L. Sturgill of Bristol, Virginia, indicating that Old Christmas has not been forgotten even if not observed.

A portion of his letter and the enclosure follow. If the latter at first seems anti-climatic this far into the new year, a reading will show that it has a timeless charm.

"Dear Mr. Whitener: After reading your article in the Bristol paper this morning, I recalled having a story in one of my many scrapbooks concerning Old Christmas. It was written by a very dear friend of mine: Mr. Henry P. Scaff of Stanville, Ky., and was carried in the Floyd County Times December 24, 1953. Am enclosing you a copy I have typed. Thought you might want to use it in some future article."

THE CATTLE LOW AT MIDNIGHT
The little boy sat upon his fa-

ther's knee, repeating the stories grandmother had told. He was four. His leg swung back and forth, keeping time, it seemed, to the waxing and waning of youthful talk. It was long ago, he said, when men rode camels and fled wicked kings.

Grandmother had told him of the birth of the Christ child and how Three Wise Men came to bring presents. Other stories too, she told him, of olden days when there were brownies and elves and, oh yes, there was the story of Old Christmas, when the cattle knelt in the barn and lowed and prayed, for that was when the Christ Child was born. He talked on, the swinging of the leg ceased and he stared at the Yule fire. He was soon asleep.

Now there are people who are grown and pretend to be wise by not believing the old legend. Of such was the child's father. He told him when he was awake again, that only a few of grand-

mother's stories were true, that cattle did not kneel on Old Christmas night to low and pray. He tried to explain that Old Christmas was just a day that older people remembered from a change in the calendar.

"But Daddy, you said the story of the Three Wise Men was true. You said Jesus was born on Christmas Night. The Wise Men bowed to the Christ Child." The little boy was puzzled but mostly he thought that Daddy did not believe grandmother. That was wrong. Everybody ought to believe grandmother.

When Christmas Day was over the boy was full of wonder at how Santa had come down the sooty chimney to leave such glistening toys. Wonder yielded to the pleasure of the hour. Nights he fell asleep on grandmother's lap, dreaming of the Wise Men, and of hearing the cattle low at the barn. To him it was not merely twelve days between Christmas Eve and Old Christmas. It was an interlude of play and dreams.

Old Christmas Eve came, grandmother had gone, and the child went to sleep, thinking of her and of how father did not believe all she had said. It was wrong, he knew, not to believe grandmother, she was so nice and good. It was wrong. Dreamless sleep comes to cherubs, be they of earth or sky.

Sometime in the night the father, awakened by the patter of little feet, saw his child approach the outer door and open it. The moonlight silhouetted the tiny figure as he stood in the doorway. The father threw back the cover, moved along to stand at the open door with his little son. The child reached up a chubby hand and they stood together, staring into the moonlight.

Down in the valley, in the pine trees, the moonlight had yielded to darkness. Down the slope where the barn housed the cattle not a stray moonbeam pierced. They stood in the doorway, these two, one older and wiser, the other a young child who clasped his father's finger. Silence reigned in the moonlight, silence pervaded the darkness that covered the barn and trees.

Both tensed with the sound of a low that came from the darkness—a soft low that came from near the barn under the great pines. The child leaned forward, staring into the night, pulling at his father's hand. "Did you hear it, father, it is like grandmother said."

It was strange, the father thought when he awakened in the morning, that he did not remember going back to bed after they had stood in the doorway. He thought it must have been midnight when he heard the soft low from the barn. Strange, why he thought it was midnight when he had not looked at the clock.

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HEALTH NEWS
Your Rx Specialists:
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Pharmacy Week Theme

Pharmacy has selected an important health subject for its theme during National Pharmacy Week, January 20-26. It goes like this: "Before you self-medicate, consult your pharmacist. For over-the-counter intelligence your pharmacist has it."

Home remedies, or over-the-counter drug products are important to self-medication. Obviously, we can't call a physician for every ailment. "Morning-after" headaches, upset stomachs, minor rashes, do not merit troubling a doctor unless pain persists or is unbearable. Unfortunately, most people know far too little about self-medication. The average person knows only what the advertiser wants him to know. This is where your pharmacist is important. Con-



Today, though over-the-counter drugs are covered by certain laws, they can still be dangerous if not properly used. The pharmacist is an expert on the safe and proper use of all drugs. Consult your pharmacist about the medicines you take. And use over-the-counter intelligence.

vide in him for better "intelligence" of over-the-counter products. And make it a habit!

The above comments appear each week to air thoughts, opinions, and information we believe to be important to our friends and customers — your comments are welcomed.

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