

Palestra

12-25-1922

Palestra 1922-12-25

Editors of The Palestra

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Recommended Citation

Editors of The Palestra, "Palestra 1922-12-25" (1922). *Palestra*. 7.
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A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS

Palestra

A HAPPY NEW
YEAR



"WHISKERS"

By T. Granville Egan

This is not a story of brave men or mighty warriors but of Yuletide, of simple human folks, such as you and I, and of a dog.

"Whiskers" was none of your aristocratic bluebloods. There wasn't a drop of royal fluid in his veins. He was "just dog." But what a dog. He looked like an airedale and acted like a human being. Just now he was the property of Mr. Jackie Plank, age five, becoming so in a not unusual way. Jackie was out walking with his mother, and a shaggy-haired, stubby-tailed little tramp dog followed him home. That shaggy hair and stubby-tail won Jackie's heart and "Whiskers" found a home.

Mrs. Plank, being a good mother, readily enough gave Jackie permission to keep the little tramp, but not without that reluctance which mothers have when they consider the mess these little creatures can create. Mr. Plank was the fly in the ointment. At present he was on a business trip and was not expected back for a month. Though a devoted husband and father, Mr. Plank had a profound hatred for domestic animals. He didn't mind them so much if they were thoroughbred and could boast a long pedigree, but a cross-breed or a tramp—well, he just simply couldn't see them.

A great companionship sprung up between Jackie and "Whiskers." They became inseparable. Where one was the other was sure to be found.

This is how matters stood when Mr. Plank returned home. Needless to say they didn't remain this way long. He refused to have a "mutt" in his house and, though Jackie loudly and tearfully protested and mother pleaded, he was relentless.

One night when Jackie was in the sweet, restful arms of Morpheus, his father took "Whiskers" away. "Whiskers" didn't know what it was all about, but being a good little dog, he went away peacefully, trusting in Mr. Plank because he was Jackie's father.

After leaving him with a friend several miles away, Mr. Plank returned home, informing Jackie next day that "Whiskers" had run away. But he didn't realize that when "Whiskers" went away he carried with him Jackie's heart. Their attachment was great and their separation intolerable. Nothing pleased the little lad. He was cranky. He ate little or nothing at all, and to crown the situation he disappeared three days before Christmas.

Mother and father were prostrate with grief. They did everything in their power to locate the lad. They hunted until they found that their efforts were futile and then they informed the police. Detectives from headquarters and private firms were employed, and it was finally decided

that he had been kidnaped.

Christmas eve came, but without Jackie. The occasion meant nothing to Jackie's parents. They began to realize that his disappearance was due to the "runaway of Whiskers"; but not a word was said on the subject. Mr. Plank was miserable. He accused himself of being everything, including a consummate old fool. Never would he forgive himself.

On all sides there were the usual Christmas preparations. Passersby were shouting "Merry Christmas" to each other. Smiles were everywhere. Every mail brought cards expressing the good wishes of the Yuletide. But what was there for them to be merry about? How they hated the expression "Merry Christmas." What right had they to enjoy the season when Jackie, the pride of their hearts, was lost.

While pondering over these thoughts he heard a low whine outside the door and then a bark: "Whiskers!" He recognized that whine and bark. He'd fix that dog. He wouldn't let him cause any more trouble.

He grabbed his gun and rushed to the door.

"Where are you going with that gun?" called out his wife.

"I'm going to kill that damned cur."

Again the whine and the bark. With a low oath, Mr. Plank threw open the door. His wife grabbed him.

"Jack, you're a fool and an idiot. I haven't said anything, but I should have, and I'm going to now. Put up that gun and listen to me."

"Whiskers," his mouth covered with blood, tugged at the hem of her dress and tried to make her follow.

"It was your fault that we lost Jackie in the first place, by taking this dog away. Now realize that and stop acting the part of a fool, at least until we find Jackie."

With that off her mind, she put on her coat and followed "Whiskers." At the corner they met a policeman and, reinforced by this arm of the law, the queer procession moved down the street.

About a half-mile from home—"Whiskers" turned into a little deserted house set far back from the street. The front door was closed but a broken window testified that "Whiskers" had made a heroic exit.

The policeman forced the door open and they found lying on the floor a dead man, his throat horribly mangled. "Whiskers" passed him up with a snarl and headed for the next room. There was Jackie chained to the wall, half dead from weakness and hunger. How he got there no one knows. Possibly it was while searching for "Whiskers," or perhaps he had been kidnaped.

As for "Whiskers," well you were told in the beginning of this story that he was "just dog," looked like an airedale and acted like a human being.

The Nativity

Far through the heavens
And through the night air,
Comes the singing of Angels,
Hovering there.

They are chanting of glory;
For Jesus is born,
And the world from the power
Of Satan is torn.

The soft, merry anthem
With rapture doth fill
The shepherd who watches
His flock on the hill.

Pray what is this rapture
That stirs in my heart?
Pray what is this glory
In which I have part?

And why does the starlight
From the dark heavens shine
On one lonely stable
Which harbors the kine?

And Angels of Heaven
The sweet song have made:
"Gloria in excelsis Deo."
—Edward Powers.

O what means the song
Of the Angels on high?
And why the rejoicing?
What Feast day is nigh?

Like the sweet sound of music
Far off in the night,
As clear comes the answer
In words filled with light.

" 'Tis Jesus, our Savior;
'Tis the night of His birth;
'Tis God who is saving
The sore-stricken earth."

And there the sweet Infant
In Mary's embrace,
Descends to His creatures,
The King of our race.

For Christ in the manger
On cold straw was laid;
The Promise of God
His prophets obeyed.

THE DIARY OF A SMALL BOY

By Lawrence Booth

December twenty-third. Gee, I can hardly wait till Xmas. Ma took me down town today and we went to a big store where there were more toys than I ever seen before in my hole life. We went down to where Santa Claus lives and I toled him everything I wanted him to give me. I toled him I wanted a nice little dog, a cemetery set like you see in the ads, some bocksing gloves, an air-gun, a big bocks of candy that I could eat all by myself, and some mony. He said that was quiet a lot, but he looked at my mother ad then said that he'd see that I got what I wanted.

Dec. 24.—I'm bein' as nice as I can now, helping Ma and saying a lot of extra prayers. Ma went down town again today but she didnt take me with her. I am going to bed early tonight so that tomorrow will seem to come quicker.

Dec. 25.—Santa Claus came today and he musteve known how good I've been because he brought me everything I asked for. He brought me the finest dog you've ever saw. He's a collie and I call him "Sabe." I got the bocksing gloves and the air-gun and a dandy big kemistry set and two dollars in money and the candy. "Sabe" and I went up to my room and et all the candy. O yes, I almost forgot. I got a necktie. I didn't want a necktie. I have too many allready. This ain't a classy one neither. To-

morrow I'm going to have some fun playing with all my things.

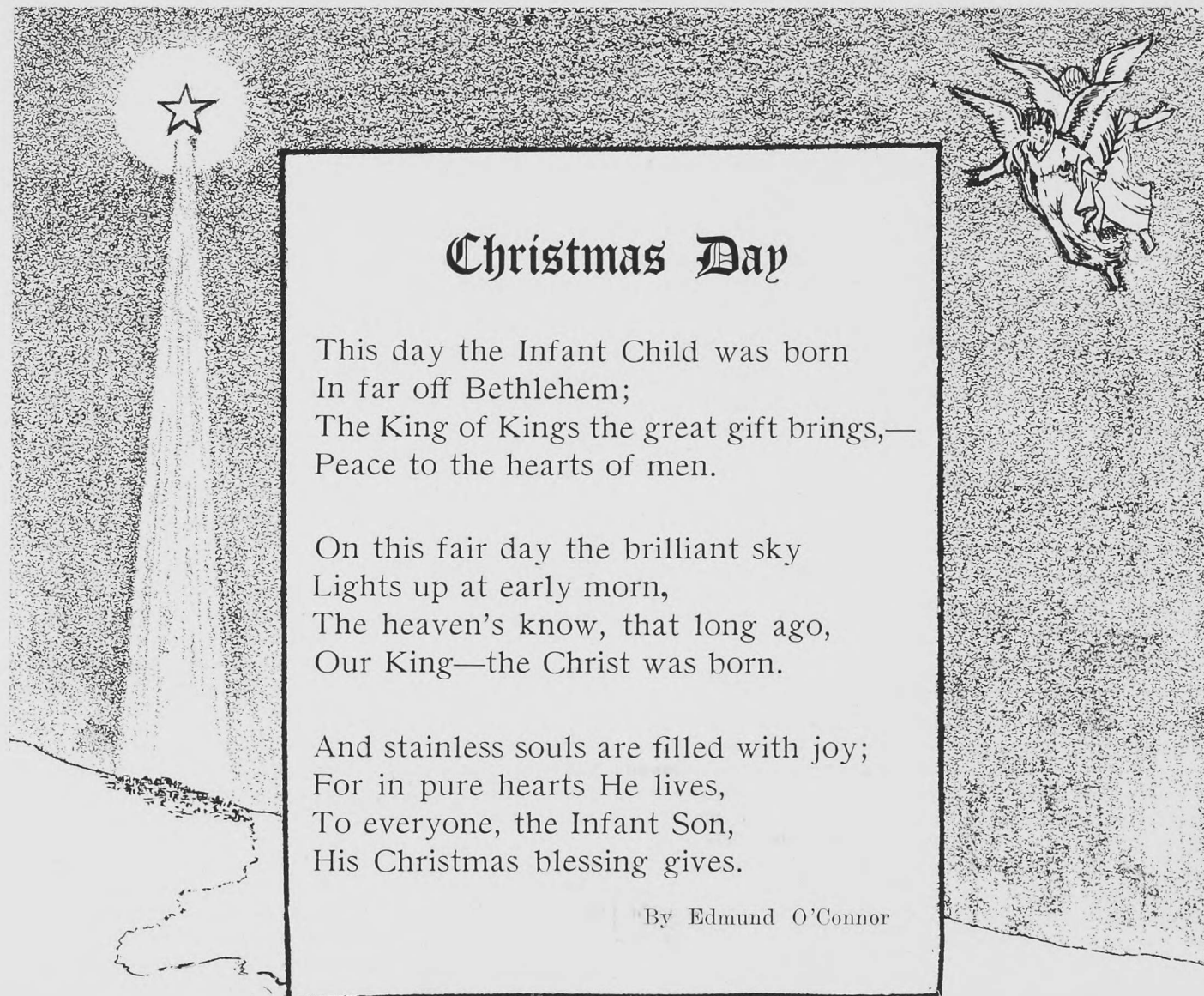
Dec. 27.—I couldn't rite yesterday, I was too sick. I guess all that candy made me sick. First of all I didn't feel good but I got up anyway and went out to have some fun. I took my gun and started shooting. I hit a plateglass window in front of the store of that mean old man Jones and axidently broke it. He took my gun away an made me give him my two dollars to pay for the window. That made me sickern ever. I came home crying and Ma put me to bed. While I was in bed I started in working with my cemistry set. I mixed a lot of things together and lit them with a match. I must have did something rong because it exploded. My set was blown all over the room and my hands and face was burned. About eight o'clock when I was ready to go to sleep Ma came in and toald me that "Sabe" et my bocksing gloves and then went off in a corner and died, probberily of poisening or consterpation or something. Christmas is over now and I haven't got nothing left, that is, nothing except the necktie.

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Christmas Day

This day the Infant Child was born
In far off Bethlehem;
The King of Kings the great gift brings,—
Peace to the hearts of men.

On this fair day the brilliant sky
Lights up at early morn,
The heaven's know, that long ago,
Our King—the Christ was born.

And stainless souls are filled with joy;
For in pure hearts He lives,
To everyone, the Infant Son,
His Christmas blessing gives.

By Edmund O'Connor

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Howard Le Clair

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is one of the most cherished doctrines of the Catholic Church. It has from the beginning of Christianity always been more or less accepted, but was not defined as a dogma until December 8, 1854. Then it was that Pius the Ninth with his council of Cardinals and Bishops solemnly decreed: "That the most Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Christ, the Savior of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God and therefore must be believed firmly and steadfastly by all the faithful."

By this decree it is plainly seen what the Catholic Church holds. It does not say that the Blessed Virgin was cleansed from original sin at birth, or cleansed before birth, but that she was preserved from the instant of her conception. In other words when her soul united to her body, God held the Devil back, and

prevented sin from entering into the soul of our Holy Mother.

How can anyone who acknowledges Mary to be the Mother of God, contend at the same time, that she was tainted with sin, the most hideous thing in the sight of God? Is there anyone who would not, if it were in his power, preserve his mother from stain and keep her pure and undefiled as the morning dew upon the snow-white cheeks of the chaste lily? No. Then why should not God, who has the power; who detests sin more than we can realize; who was to become Man in the womb of Mary; why should not God preserve His Mother from all stain?

Can it be possible that Christ, who was to save mankind, who was to conquer Satan and his works; who was to be the light of the world, would come down from His home in Heaven to dwell in an abode ever tainted with sin—ever ruled by the Devil? No; Christ came down to earth and dwelt in a Mother never defiled, and she bore Him to the world with a brilliancy undimmed by any cloud of sin, past or present.

Just as the morning sun rises in the East and shines in all its glory and

splendor from a clear blue sky upon the chill, reposing earth; so Christ, the Son of God, came forth from a hallowed home, and delighted the sinful world with the pure, bright rays of salvation.

It is the great and unsurpassed privilege of ours, to be chosen the children of this same Mother, who gave to us the Redeemer of mankind. Think of the sublime honor given to us, to be acknowledged as her sons; and think of her great love for us, to appoint herself our Protectress and Benefactress. Then ask yourself: "Have I deserved these great gifts; am I what the Mother of God would wish me to be; can she truly call me son; can I, unashamed, call her my Mother?" If you examine yourself and find yourself wanting, bow your head in humble submission and pray to her, the holiest of the holy, the purest of the pure outside of the Divinity Itself: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee."

Once the children were satisfied with writing Santa Claus. Now, they expect to "pick up" his answer on the radio.

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A MERRY CHRISTMAS

This year the Palestra, with the characteristic boldness and faith in its readers that a pioneer publication possesses, has endeavored to publish a Christmas number. And this Christmas number, whether it is a success or not, is the cornerstone, laid by the students, for a future Christmas magazine rivaling anything we can imagine at present.

So, with your Christmas charity bear with us, while we thank you for the assistance—physical, moral and financial—that you have given us.

From the bottom of our hearts, which are thrilling under the warmth of this blessed Yuletide season, we sincerely wish all the readers of the Palestra the Merriest Christmas and the Happiest New Year they have ever enjoyed.

First among those to whom we wish the season's greetings are our teachers, and the faculty in general. All the year through they labor for us, and consider the result of their work—well-trained and well-educated, upstanding young men, as sufficient remuneration for their efforts. Therefore it follows that the least we can do is to try and repay them in the means at hand. We know that their Christmas will be happy, their work alone brings peace and content and that is the nearest to happiness we can come on this mortal planet.

We will also take this chance to bestow our heartiest thanks and well-wishes on our patrons and advertisers, those who have helped so materially in whatever of success the Palestra has partaken. Moral aid is absolutely necessary, but it depends on the state of mind, and may change at will, while financial aid, the most difficult to obtain, is the very marrow and bedrock of any undertaking.

Therefore while this holiday season permeates our being we repeat our wish that **THE GREATEST HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY WILL EVER BE YOURS, AND THAT THIS CHRISTMAS WILL BE A TRUE REPLICIA IN YOUR HEARTS AND LIVES OF THAT EVENT OF TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO.**

GLORY TO GOD

With the coming of Christmas come the thoughts of Christmas, and the predominant thought of this happy season should be the thought expressed by the Angels centuries ago above the hills of Palestine—"Gloria in excelsis Deo." Poor man, with his finite comprehension of the infinity offered to his consideration, can do nothing better than bow his head in reverent praise, and murmur, "Glory to God!"

Christ is come, and Christ is God, and God is infinite. God has come for love of us to save us, to make it possible for us to enjoy eternal happiness. Therefore we sing "Gloria in excelsis Deo."

That God should save us is a tremendous thought, but that God should save us in the way He has saved us, is a concept staggering in its immensity.

Its glory, its beauty, its awe-inspiring magnificence can be expressed in but one manner, "Gloria in excelsis Deo."

Let us sing, then, in our hearts on Christmas day, that highest of all songs, "Glory to God,"—glory to God Who made us, glory to God Who saved us, glory to God Whom we shall praise forever! In Him, by Him, for Him we exist. In Him, by Him, for Him we shall exist forever!

Everywhere the Christmas spirit predominates. The fond mother is carrying home packages by the truck load; the traffic cop on Second avenue has agents doing his shopping, who promptly drop it in a pile near his 12Gs. Even the small boy has his arms full (of kindling for his mother and Santa Claus).

Now we know why the house is extra warm
When we see Dec. 23 on the calendar's form.

CHRISTMAS

Of all the festivals of the year, that of Christmas awakens the strongest and most heart-felt associations. There is in this time, a tone of solemn feeling that blends with our joyousness, and lifts our spirits to a state of hallowed and elevated happiness. There is something in the very season that gives a charm to the festivity of Christmas.

As Irving said, "At other times we derive a great portion of our pleasure from the mere beauties of nature. But in the depth of winter, when nature lies despoiled of every charm, and wrapped in her shroud of sheeted snow, we turn for our gratifications to moral sources." Our thoughts are more concentrated, our friendly sympathies are aroused. We revel with all in the kindly light of good comradeship. Friendly spirits mingle; and we draw our pleasures from the great font of human kindness, which lying in the deep recesses of our hearts, pours forth unto all, a great spirit of domestic felicity.

—By W. Taylor.

GIVING PRESENTS

The custom of gift-giving at Christmas is no doubt a remnant of the STRENAE of the Roman Emperor in Pagan Roman New Years Day. When the Christians became dominant, the custom was moved back to December.

The oldest instance of gift-giving in England dates back to the sixteenth century when Christmas boxes were the vogue. In the modern custom, perhaps, can be seen a degeneration of what was once a friendly entertainment, given in return for the good wishes and luck brought by wassailers. As to the Christmas boxes, some

say, that the poor were equipped with earthen boxes slotted to receive gifts of money, food and clothing. Though the custom has changed somewhat, and charity has, to some extent, been lost through mad commercialism, still, gift-giving is an admirable custom, but if one is disposed to give, let him at least choose useful articles.

Christmas may come and Christmas may go, but the bills (and interest) go on forever. Too well the modern "Dads" are learning the truth of the time-tried (?) axiom above.

ST. NICHOLAS

The most distinctive children's festival of the whole year is, without a doubt, the feast of St. Nicholas. As Santa Clause, St. Nicholas is of course known to every English child, but rather as a sort of incarnation of Christmas than as a saint with a day of his own.

Nicholas died in the year 352 and, although very little is known of his life, there exists many legends which attest his love for the little ones and above all his love for Christ. In pictures he is represented as bearing good things to the children, and this tradition has been carried down through the ages. Each year the happiness of the children is punctuated by the arrival of St. Nicholas.

'Tis strange that Protestant countries should cling to this Catholic custom in honor of one of the Church's saints. True, in the early days of the reformation, Protestants deemed the condemnation of St. Nicholas' day imperative because of his religion. But, like the other innovations of the Reformation, nothing was done. And to this day, in every Christian country the hearts of children are made happy by the annual visit of St. Nicholas, rejuvenated into the form of Santa Claus.

Every year the large stores have a Santa Claus, and thousands of children flock from suburb and tenement to see and talk to him. With childish faith and innocence they present their lists of desired toys and can scarcely wait till Christmas morning, believing in their Saint with might and main.

It's a shame that we cannot preserve this innocence and childish faith. Too soon we learn "There is no Santa"; too soon we learn the truth, and in the learning acquire a nice, varnished coating of callousness.

There is something fascinating in the very season of the year that lends a quaint charm to the gay festivities of this holiday. Gathered around the hearth, in the glow of the dying embers, sit grandfather and grandmother recalling childhood days, with a joyful gleam in their eyes, while the younger members of the household are reveling in the height of their merry-making as they decorate the tree and fill the tiny socks, hung in implicit faith but a few hours previous by the little folk, in eager anticipation of Santa's arrival. From without, the occasional peals of hearty laughter and chattering voices, mingled with the sweet strains of church bells chiming forth into the starry night from their lofty tower; within the green holly wreaths bejeweled with clusters of red berries, together with the lavishly adorned tree, gleaming with sparkling tinsel and myriads of flickering candles; all speak of the cheer and universal joy of Christmas.

A Cross-Eyed Santa Claus

By Harry Burns

John rushed in through the door, gave his coat a vigorous shake to dislodge the tenaciously clinging snowflakes, and plunged down a number of packages which gavored suspiciously of Christmas. The season had an especial fascination for him; its gay shops, alive with light and scurrying crowds, the soft, fresh snow, cloaking in graceful folds the harshness and ugliness of the city, the bright, scarlet holly berries that everywhere flaunted themselves before his eyes, and, above all, the spirit of the time, the feeling of good fellowship and bonhomie, with which the air was rife; all these never failed to thrill him as nothing else could. Even the conventional cries of "Merry Christmas" awoke in him a response.

It was a week before that well loved holiday when he returned from town laden with presents for the family. The problem was, where to hide them so that they would remain undiscovered until the arrival of Christmas Eve. He knew his brothers and sisters well enough to realize that the place of concealment must be secure and safe from the most inquisitive eye and hand. After considerable deliberation, he decided that in the attic they would least likely be discovered, so up in the dusty, cobwebby old garret he searched around, till, in a remote corner behind some mouldy rafters, he found what he thought to be a perfect hiding place.

Three times during the week he returned to see that the gifts remained unmolested for he had spent much time in their selection and considered them most suitable to their recipients.

Christmas Eve at last arrived. It was ideal. Outside the snowflakes frivoled and swirled aimlessly, draping the trees with fantastic hangings and blanketing the ground with a pearly robe of the most delicate texture. Within the yule log glowed rudely and a spirit of geniality prevailed. The rooms were ablaze with light: a Christmas tree scintillated and glistened with a thousand prismatic colors. Conversation flowed freely, punctuated at frequent intervals with bursts of laughter.

Under the tree reposed the presents wrapped in delicate white tissue. Often and longing were the glances cast by the younger members of the family in their direction.

Now the time had come for the presentation of the gifts. Everyone looked on with hushed expectancy, including John, who with just pride awaited the opening of his contributions. Just then he imagined he heard a low chuckle escaping the lips of someone present. His father was undoing his gift.

"Love to Dad from John," he read. There displayed to their gaze was a cheap comb. Father was bald. The contents of Mother's package proved to be a battered old derby, and twen-

What Christmas Means

By Maynard O'Leary

As the days grow shorter and Christmas draws near, excitement reaches its height. Green and red are predominant colors, and displays of brilliant lights are made in every window. Wreaths begin to appear in the homes of our neighbors, and we follow by placing one in ours.

For mothers and fathers this is the greatest of occasions, for does it not mean the greatest happiness to prepare gifts of all descriptions for the little ones?

Children dream for days of what dear old Santa is going to leave. Little Frank has the wood box filled, and little Nell always helps mother wash the dishes and never complains.

Many mysterious things happen during these happy days. Mothers and fathers bring home numberless packages of all sizes and shapes, which are not to be opened till Christmas. For some unknown reason the children are not allowed to go into certain rooms or look in certain drawers.

On Christmas Eve the children are told they must go to bed early as Santa Claus will be there soon.

Indeed, the spirit that fills all Christians at this time of the year is both a joyful and holy one. Joyful because so much depended on that one day when a little Child was born in Bethlehem, and holy because on this day Christ redeemed us. Also, it is joyful for the material help furnished to numerous poor families, and holy because of the spirit of charity and love that provides the means needed for such assistance. Surely the world is a better place because Xmas returns with each closing year.

A CRIB

In the house of Christ we enter
Thru its aisles our course we wend,
And before the little crib
On our knees we humbly bend.

Here to the Infant Jesus
Our heart goes out in prayer
For we know that He is always,
Always, waiting for us there.

—By Geo. Stuntz.

ty-year-old sister's present was an enormous rag doll.

"But these aren't the ones," he explained. His expostulations were drowned out.

Yes, he knew that they would get their original presents, but John felt that the whole effect was spoiled.

Underneath it all he was sure that he recognized the crude handiwork of his younger brother—who had wisely decided to disappear from the scene for the time.

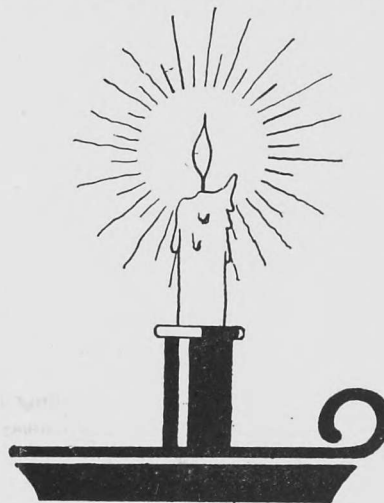
Christmas spirit is predominated by Charity, but in some men's vocabulary this word is a rarity.

Christmas In the Home

By Lee Burke

Do you remember when you believed in Santa Claus? Those were "The Days of Real Sport!" Do you remember when you wrote letters, or saw Santa in "person" in your house, or talked to him in the toy emporium? Many sleepless nights you spent thinking of the good things that you would receive.

The time of year is now approaching when old Santa again makes his visit to the little ones who steadfastly believed in him. Perhaps you have a little brother or sister at home for whom it will be your joy to take the part of Santa Claus. You



will play the part of Santa, dressed in long white beard and hair, red cap, with jacket and trousers to match, and big knee boots.

But you say there is no Santa Claus. You do not believe in any such fantasy now.

If you reason with yourself you will say there IS A SANTA CLAUS!

He is the spirit who comes at Christmas time when the thought of gifts creeps into your hearts and you plan little presents for your relatives and friends. And you receive in return.

That IS SANTA CLAUS! Santa Claus not as you once thought, and as your little brother or sister now thinks; but He is the Spirit!

THE YULETIDE LESSON

By J. Fitzgerald

As we, filled with the spirit of Yuletide, look forth from the monotony of the school year, we seek with avaricious joy, that temporary haven of happiness in the recreation from care, Christmas. Through the four weeks of Advent we impatiently await the coming of the Redeemer of man, the Savior of the world, in flesh. Upon this day of days, the feast of the Nativity, our days of expectation are ended, our patience is rewarded, and He who saved us from eternal perdition, dwells amongst us. He, having died to save us, is therefore the most precious, the most costly gift which could be bestowed upon us by the Heavenly Father.

From the priceless gift of God to

man, the custom of presenting gifts to one another, takes its meaning. The first to follow this custom were the three wise men from the East, who laid at the feet of the new-born Babe their princely gifts of frankincense and gold. They, believing in the divinity of Christ, paid homage and tribute to Him. This custom has been transmitted from generation to generation through the centuries, and by these presents we are reminded that our Savior was given to us.

The candles decorating the tree and sending forth their soft flickering glow, remind us of the happy participants of the scene; of the light of faith, with which God has so generously endowed us. The tree, sturdily erect under its heavy burden, stands placidly by, its significance suffering not at all in comparison with that of the others; for does it not represent the cross upon which our Lord, in agony, laid down his life, that we might live?

And the Christmas atmosphere, permeated with a feeling of everlasting joy and tranquility at the birth of our Savior, should lure the troubled spirit from its bed of care, impart peace and repose to the heart, and instill a passionate longing in the soul of man, for that purity, that untainted innocence, found in the new-born babe.

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"A CHILD SHALL LEAD HIM"

A Play in One Act

By GEORGE STUNTZ

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Time: Xmas Eve.

Place: The parlor of a small apartment.

Characters: Ronald Rothwell, a wealthy young business man.

John, his man-servant.

The room is richly furnished. A library table, with appropriate articles on it, and a chair in center, a chair near right entrance and a stand in left corner on which is a miniature Christmas tree. Three or four tasteful pictures on the wall.

Rothwell: (enters right, lays coat and hat on chair): What a night! Confound it the snow is enough to get on a man's nerves without these little whelps pestering you to buy holly wreaths and a lot of other trash. Money can be used for better purposes. Christmas—what tommy rot! Child's play, that's what it is.

(Crossing to center he sees tree.)

What the devil is this bush doing in here? Some more of that old fool's Xmas spirit I guess.

(In an angry voice)

John, Oh John, come in here. (John enters, open letter in hand.)

Roth.: Look here, you old scoundrel. What is this thing doing in here?

John: Why, sir, you—you know tomorrow's Christmas. I—

Roth. (Knocking tree to floor): That's enough about Xmas. Now pick that up and get out. You and your Christmas bunk. I'll see if I can't get someone in your place in the morning. Get out and stay out.

(John leaves, dropping letter in excitement.)

Roth. (in angry mood, walks about room): Damn this business anyway. Can't a man have peace even in his own home? (Stops, sees letter on floor.) What's this? Some prayer the old fool dropped I suppose. (Picks letter up.) No. It's a letter. Surely doesn't belong to me. Well, let's see. (Reads aloud.)

Dear Daddy:

Just think, Daddy, the day after tomorrow is Christmas. Now Daddy, you must go to midnight Mass for Mama. Won't you Daddy dear? Don't you remember it is just three years since Mama died? Sister said

Father Murphy is going to offer up a Mass for her.

Gee, Daddy, I wish Mama was here so we could be together Christmas. Now don't forget to go to Mass and say, couldn't you bring Mr. Rothwell? Mama told me once he used to go to church when he was a boy.

Love,

ANN.

Roth.: I wonder who that is from. The old foggy must have a daughter. So that's who he goes to see at Albany. Huh!— No, I can't let myself think that way. He has got to go in the morning. His fool ideas are getting on my nerves. Business and religion don't mix.

(John enters.)

Roth.: What do you want? Didn't I tell you to get out?

John: Why, sir, I'm on my way. I'm going to church.

Roth.: That's it. Church! church! church! Everything church! Why—

John: Now just a moment. I've stood your bulldosing long enough and since I'm leaving I'm going to tell you a few things. Now don't get excited. Not so many years ago I was just like you, young, prosperous and all business. I hated everything Christian. Yes, I must admit I even hated the greatest of all seasons, Christmas. And when my little girl asked me to go to Mass I laughed her to shame. Yes, my own daughter. But things suddenly changed. My wife worried by my carelessness, died. Soon after I lost my fortune, but, thank God, I—, well there's the church bell ringing. I must be going. Good bye, sir, and a Merry Christmas.

(Rothwell, at mention of Xmas, starts to rise, but falls back in chair.)

(John leaves.)

(Roth. thinks a minute then rises quickly; goes to door.)

Hey, John, come back just for a second. I'm going to church with you.

(John enters.)

Roth.: Say, John, here's a letter you dropped when I first came in. Tell your little girl that Mr. Rothwell is going to church, and say, would you read it to me so I can know what real Christmas spirit is? Hurry now so we won't be late.

(Curtain as he reads.)

gifts of these distinguished visitors, perhaps it was the supreme joy felt by mankind in knowing that at last the gates of heaven were to be reopened; perhaps it was God's own gift of His dearly beloved Son to us; that has instilled in our souls the desire to give and to cheer at Christmas-tide.

It is at this time of the year that we are invariably brought back over the two thousand long years filled with history and romance, that have elapsed since the birth of Jesus.

Christ, to the little town of Bethlehem.

* * * * *

It is December. The little village lies asleep, tranquil and peaceful as a child. From over the fields below come the long sweeping breaths of nightly air that pass like cool caresses over the house tops. The meadows with their black shadows, put on a mysterious and enchanting majesty, under the white light of a fading moon. The running waters that ripple and murmur in the darkness, sound like the rhythmic breathing of the sleeping country.

Outside of the quiet town, unnoticed, pitiful in its misery and poverty, stands a forlorn cavern in the hill. Peering in the large opening, where the wind was wont to intrude, we see an inspiring sight—a bit of heaven. Nay—it is heaven. Heaven come to earth in the form of a helpless, crying Babe; reaching with eager, outstretched hands to a frail mother almost as beautiful in her youth and immaculate innocence as the tiny Son before her. Her lips wreathed in an angelic smile, she croons a soft little melody to soothe and comfort Him. We wonder, as we observe the crude furnishings, the rocky walls, the boardless floor, the ox and the ass quietly feeding on the remnants of hay strewn about the manger, the poor little crib stuffed with straw; we wonder how one could be so infinitely happy. But here is the reason.

The Almighty God, supreme in all things, the Maker and Creator of the vast heavens and the insignificant earth, with all that they contain; He, the Mighty One, whose name the Jews had feared to speak, lies before Her as an Infant, pitifully weak and small; tearfully crying for her love; bravely starting on the terrible way which is to lead to Calvary and our redemption. Here is the reason, and here is the greatest of all mysteries.

* * * * *

Again it is December, and the exhilarating phrase, "Merry Christmas," bursts forth from every gladdened throat. Enemies cease to be enemies, and a warm, sincere hand-clasp unites friend to friend. The miser, with a feeling of tenderness stealing into his stony heart, finds his claw-like hand slowly creeping down into his pockets for a treasured coin to bestow upon some shivering, sobbing beggar child. The pessimist, for once in his overburdened life, carelessly tosses his grievance to the four winds of the earth and basks in the sunshine of his own happiness.

It is Christmas, and the very name floods the most indifferent hearts with love, generosity and joy. The whole world rejoices in one grand anthem, "Gloria in excelsis Deo."

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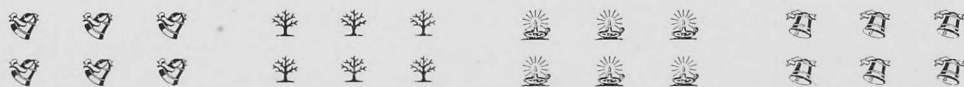
WHAT IS CHRISTMAS?

By Carl Gneccia

Beginning with the old, old journey when the Three Wise Men rode from the East into the West on that first blessed Christmas night, bearing beneath their royal garments, costly caskets containing gold and frankincense and myrrh to be laid at the feet of the new born Babe, the sublime virtues of charity and love crept into the frigid hearts of humanity. Perhaps it was the rare

The Roman Martyrology

IN THE YEAR, from the creation of the world, when in the beginning God created heaven and earth, five thousand, one hundred and ninety-nine; from the flood, two thousand, nine hundred and fifty-seven; from the birth of Abraham, two thousand and fifteen; from Moses and the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt, one thousand, five hundred and ten; from the anointing of King David, one thousand and thirty-two; in the sixty-fifth week, according to the prophecy of Daniel; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; in the year seven hundred and fifty-two from the founding of the city of Rome; in the forty-second year of the empire of Octavian Augustus, when the whole earth was at peace, in the sixth age of the world, Jesus Christ, eternal God, and Son of the eternal Father, desirous to sanctify the world by His most merciful coming, having been conceived by the Holy Ghost, and nine months having elapsed since His conception, is born in Bethlehem of Juda, having become man of the Virgin Mary. The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.



THE HEART OF A MAN
By Ray Lynch

"It was always said of him that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us every one."—Charles Dickens.

The supreme season of peace and good will and joy—Christmas! This is the one occasion of the year, on which all the elements which lead to the impression of beauty, color and music, gather together to cheer the heart of men.

The little village of Ashworth was no exception. Christmas was their one big, grand and glorious feast. Ever since the village had been founded by William Ashworth there was always a public party at the Ashworth residence on Christmas night. Toys and candy were given to the children and the older people were entertained with dancing and refreshments. It was always said that the Ashworths knew how to keep Christmas well.

John Ashworth, now presiding over the Ashworth estate, was an honest, good-hearted, but strict man. His son, John, Jr., who had not felt the helping hand of a mother, since she had died when he was an infant, was now going to Harvard, that is had been going until lately.

The senior Ashworth had not yet torn off the November sheet of the calendar, when he received a telegram from his son. It simply said,

"Dear Dad. Will arrive home on 6:30 train Monday."

What could be wrong? Was the boy sick? Was he hurt? Why was he coming home in November, when the Christmas holidays did not start until late in December?

No. The boy was not sick, nor was he hurt. The truth was he had been expelled. Yes, John, Junior, had been expelled. Three times he had been caught gambling; twice the Dean had only reprimanded him, but on the third charge, he felt it his duty to expel the boy, though he knew that there was much good in the hot-headed lad's heart.

Gambling did not have a more bitter enemy than John Ashworth, and upon hearing the cause of his son's expulsion, an argument began. Hot words passed between the father and son, and the last of the Ashworths was commanded to leave the house, never to return.

Five years have passed since the parting of father and son.

Old John had died of a broken heart.

Young John, with the help of bad liquor and gambling, had risen to fame as being the most cunning and desperate of outlaws.

It was Christmas Eve, and although there was a price of one thousand dollars on his head, John could not stand being alone on that day of days. He dared to enter the old town to enjoy the scenes and joys of other days.

As he passed through the quiet streets, he was met face to face by the town sheriff, and then the chase began.

John escaped by dodging around the nearest corner, and running across some fields came to a small house. He could enter here and force them to hide him.

Creeping around the house, John came up to the small window and peered in. A small candle and a scant fire in the hearth was the only light, and it showed a little child trying to hang up a little stocking, and a young mother holding back her tears and telling the child that, "Since daddy had gone to heaven, mother did not have much money, and Santa was charging for his candy and toys this year, and maybe he wouldn't leave much."

John's heart softened at the sight; he was still standing by the window when he heard the barking of dogs. They had bloodhounds on his trail. He would wade the river and escape. No, the generosity and kindness of the Ashworths was again in his heart; he had a better, more noble scheme.

Silently sneaking around to the door, he kicked it open, and at the point of a gun made the frightened woman tie his hands with a piece of rope. Then going over to the child he said: "Santa Claus sent me, take hold of the end of the rope and when the other men come, just say to them, 'Here is the man. Give me the reward.' Don't forget, little man, just say that."

When Christmas season is over we can look forward to the semi-final examinations.

* * *

Empty Christmas talking will not fill empty Christmas stockings.

STUDENTS' FATHER DIES

A touch of sadness has been added to our hearty enjoyment of Christmas. We received news a few days ago of the death of Mr. O'Hearn, the father of two students of Seattle College, Maurice and Raphael. We beg the afflicted family to receive the sincere condolences of the student body of Seattle College. The soul of Mr. O'Hearn will be remembered in the prayers of all of us.

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