

CHRISTMAS WITH "DAD" AS THE GOAT

By BYRON WILLIAMS

Along about October 1 when the granaries of the world are full to bursting and the collar is so cluttered up with coal and preserves that the maid cannot reach the laundry taps without stumbling over the snow-shovel, somebody says something about Christmas and gives father heart disease. All summer "dad" has been wrestling with the problems of business—this was presidential year, and everybody had to have vacations and Billy & Jones started in direct competition and—oh, the dickens knows what!

And now he has to face that Christmas thing again!

The list is a mile long and father knows it will put a crimp in his bank account amounting almost to cramp, but mother says it will have to be added to, if anything, so there!

But somehow as I look at "dad," I cannot restrain from asking:

"Why should father be the goat?"

It wasn't so in the days when I was dreaming of a wonderful career in letters. Everybody worked on Christmas presents then and father was not called upon to settle the Christmas bills for all the family. I made a "corner-copia" (We don't spell it now the way we pronounced it then) for mother. She knitted some

socks for me. I rigged up a shaving-paper outfit for pa and he gave me a perfectly good twenty-five cent jack-knife. I made a wood box for the neighbor's wife and she sewed me a pair of mittens. Everybody made things in those days. For weeks before the holidays, mother worked every night on Christmas gifts, and she was as happy as could be doing things for those she loved. Into the fabric of what she was sewing, she put the love and affection of a great heart—and all of us did the same.

And I'll leave it to you—didn't the things we got in the old days, the presents we made ourselves for each other, come nearer exemplifying the true Christmas spirit?

Of course they did!

And father did not have to dig down in his pocket and pay for two hundred and fifty-seven presents, two hundred of which are given just because somebody else gave us something and got on the confounded list!

I'm for Christmas—but I like the old-fashioned observance best. It isn't observing the "peace-on-earth" spirit to load "dad" up with so much debt that he can't crawl out in five months. Better take to wood boxes and cornucopias.

CANDY BY THE BARREL

If candy makers had to depend on men consumers instead of upon Cupid and the kids, there would be great failures in saccharine circles—but there is one time of the year that my masculine sweet-tooth asserts itself and then, instead of yearning for the chocolate-cream confections or the fruit dips, it clamors for a big bag of mixed candy, right out of the barrel!

I admit it is a plebeian taste, that the candy is mostly glue and flour jumbled to suit the taste of the adolescent—but somehow I cannot feel that I have rightly celebrated Christmas without this bag of candy. When I was a boy this is the sort of candy we got and the taste was early acquired. And what a lot of anticipation there was in eating the stuff—anticipation because when you stuck your hand in the sack for a sweet bit, you never knew whether it would come out clutching a lemon-drop, a caramel or a peppermint!

And, too, the candy was cheap. You

could get a big bag full of it for ten cents—and some of it was red and some white and some yellow and there were sugar hearts with mottoes on them and nice round marble-balls with nuts in them and funny animal shapes that tickled—and oh! heaps of interesting things in that Christmas sack of candy.

This was the same kind of candy we got sewed up in red mosquito-bar sacks at the Sunday school Christmas tree festivities, along with the nuts and the popcorn balls.

And now, man that I am, I cannot get across the Rubicon of Christmas without sauntering down to the candy store and asking for a sack of candy "out of the barrel." Invariably the candy man will tell me he has much better candy and look at me in a surprised sort of way, but I know what I want when I want it—and Christmas is the time.

How about you? Haven't you a sweet tooth left for the old-fashioned candy?

THE LAND OF CHRISTMAS TREES

The express wagon is backed to the grocery store entrance and the driver, assisted by the grocer's boy, begins to unload Christmas trees. Soon the walk is cluttered with them and the passerby, catching the spirit of the tree, smile at the children gathering 'round. A light snow is falling and the green of the spruce is inviting, to say nothing of the reason it has come to town.

What a lot of Christmas trees the grocer has ordered—and yet how few compared to the many thousands that grow in Christmas Tree Land, away up north. Up there the woods are full of Christmas trees and the snows are so deep that snowshoes may be necessary. And in Christmas Tree Land there are vast stretches of nothing but evergreen trees and white snow—and in the snow, if you are versed in woodcraft, you might find the track of a deer and innumerable trails of Brother Rabbit, leading away through the greenery to the quiet, vast places.

Probably you pay \$1 or more for a Christmas tree. Up north they are free, but the hardy men who gather them must wade in the deep snow and draw them many miles to the railroad that they may be shipped to the little boys and girls of the city.

And as you sit beside your tree, with your heart glad and your spirits gay, you might ponder on how that tree got to you. You can picture the vast green fields and the forest with the snow on its shining top, shedding

jewels of light. A squirrel is floundering about in the snow trying to locate some buried nuts and a blue-jay is scolding saucily from a maple tree hard by. And then, into the quiet comes a man. He is a sturdy man with a woolen cap drawn closely over his ears and nose. There are silts for his eyes. On his feet are great woolen packs with rubber shoes and his trousers are tucked inside the packs. His coat is very odd, to you, consisting of a great, bright sweater sort of garment, buckled closely around him. On his shoulder he carries an ax. He begins to cut Christmas trees and the one you have in your home is a very pretty one that pleases him as he hauls it away to where his team awaits. With many other trees your tree is put on the sled and after a time, is hauled to the depot where it is shipped to your grocer.

The man who cut it was no doubt a lumberjack and if he is like his kind, he lives in a log cabin with his wife and children. In the olden days he worked in the timber exclusively, but now he farms during the summer on a wee farm that he is clearing of stumps, and in the winter time he cuts wood for the lumber companies.

And his little ones always have a Christmas tree, for Christmas trees are free where he lives, but probably it is not as plentifully loaded with gifts as yours, for which you should be very thankful.

MY CHRISTMAS DREAM

Now, this was the wonderful dream I had—a dream of the Christmas Tree:

I dreamed that a melody sweet and glad rang out from somewhere to me.

And out of the silvered east they came and out of the rosy west—More children than ever a man might name or ever a man has guessed;

And going and coming, and coming and going.

With drummers a-drumming and buglers a-blowing.

Were all the children that ever were known since ever there was an earth,

In hundreds, in couples, and all alone, each chanting a song of mirth.

And then in this wonderful dream of mine the children ran to and fro

And marched in a long and winding line as swiftly as they might go;

And each as he passed the Christmas Tree looked up with a radiant face,

And each as he came there bent the knee with curious, childish grace—

And coming and going, and going and coming.

With buglers a-blowing and drummers a-drumming.

Were all of the children that ever have been since there was a world at all

And none was a-hungered or pale or thin, or crippled or like to fall.

And all of them sang in this dream of mine, a song that I wish I knew.

For it had a melody fair and fine and every tone was true;

And all of the children they looked at me in pity—or so it seemed—

While stars in the boughs of the Christmas Tree in marvelous glory gleamed.

And going and coming, and coming and going.

With drummers a-drumming and buglers a-blowing.

Were all of the children that ever have played since ever the world began.

And each little fellow and each little maid delightedly laughed and ran.

And then in this wonderful dream I dreamed, I thought that the Christmas Tree

Grew fairer and fairer until it seemed no fairer a thing could be;

And all of the children they called my name and all of the children smiled.

And suddenly then to my heart there came the faith of a little child.

And going and coming and coming and going.

With drummers a-drumming and buglers a-blowing.

I marched with the children of all the lands, of all the years and times,

And laughed as we ran with our close-linked hands and chanted our world-old rhymes.

WILBUR D. NESSBIT.

Valuable Gift.

"Talking about Christmas-boxes," remarked a commercial traveler, "the one I got last year would be hard to beat. Our gov'nor never gave us a Christmas-box, so you can imagine how surprised we were when he told us all to go into his office, where he sat with a pile of envelopes in his hand.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I intend to give each of you a Christmas present this year. These envelopes contain something valuable, which I hope you will make good use of."

"Of course we thanked him and marched out, thinking that he was a good sort, after all. And what do you think was in the envelopes?"

"A check?"

"No; it was a confounded prescription for the cure of indigestion!"

Whom to Thank.

"I suppose you feel very thankful to Santa Claus for providing you with such a fine turkey?" said the minister to Uncle "L'Jah's" little boy.

"Naw, sah," replied the pious young man.

"Uncle told dis chile ter be thankful ter Farmer Green, for heavin' his hen-house done on 'em."

And now, man that I am, I cannot get across the Rubicon of Christmas without sauntering down to the candy store and asking for a sack of candy "out of the barrel." Invariably the candy man will tell me he has much better candy and look at me in a surprised sort of way, but I know what I want when I want it—and Christmas is the time.

How about you? Haven't you a sweet tooth left for the old-fashioned candy?

Downers Grove, Ill.

Dear Santa Claus:

Will you please bring my Mamma a gas heater like the one I saw in the Gas office; it is so pretty and will make the room nice and warm, and please, dear Santa, bring us some gas lights like I saw in the window of the Gas office. They are fine and the gas light don't hurt my eyes, and please, bring Daddy a gas reading lamp. I heard him say he wanted one; that's all.

Your loving friend,
Johnny.

P. S.—I forgot to say Mamma wants a gas iron, so she can iron her clothes for a few cents and without hurting her back.

HEADQUARTERS FOR Christmas Trees



Holly and Magnolia Wreaths
Mistletoe,
Christmas Candy,
Nuts, all kinds of Shelled Nut Meats
Maraschino and Glazed Cherries, Pineapple
Fruits of All Kinds.

Apples, Oranges, Grape Fruit.
Everything for the Christmas Dinner.
Prices Right.

FRED GERWIG

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