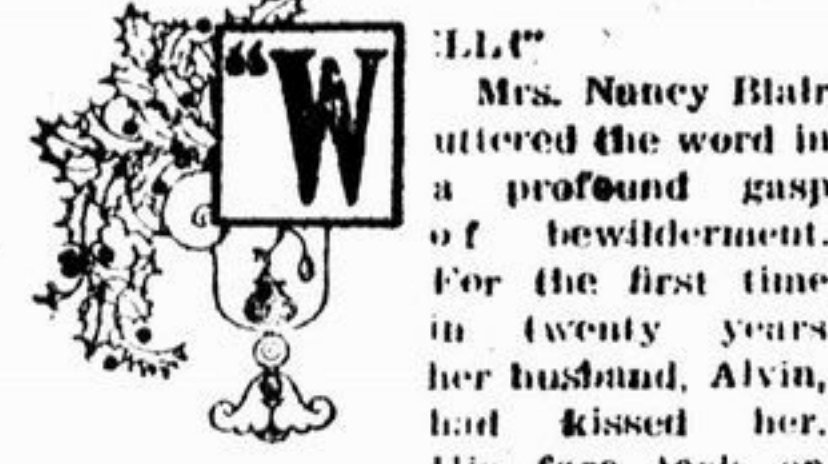


Kissing Time and Christmas Time

By GENEVIEVE ULMAR



“WELL!” Mrs. Nancy Blair uttered the word in a profound gasp of bewilderment. For the first time in twenty years her husband, Alvin, had kissed her. His face took on a sudden flush of color, showing that his strongly unusual act had moved her to the depths.

“It’s the Christmas spirit,” fluttered Nancy, but she was wrong, and stood staring after the man she had taken as a life partner because she had truly loved him.

“What in the world does that mean?” she murmured.

But Alvin was gone, as if half-shamed at his impulsiveness and hurried to his wagon outside.

“Kissing time!” he soliloquized, and aptly, it transpired. “I couldn’t help it. Poor dear! She seemed to prize that first token of romance of the dull plodding years.

Alvin hummed an old love song that took him back to the early days of courtship. He showed up the horses as he peered through the leafless trees of a grove near the road. Then he chuckled as he caught sight of a slim, girlish figure and a companion. She was Lucella Morse, the daughter of a neighbor, and beside her was her own handsome, stalwart son, Robt. Blair. They stood near together, fairly close to face, and their attitude betokened acknowledged lovers.

“This will give Nancy a genuine surprise,” ruminated Alvin. “Well now, look at that—more surprising still!”

This time, near the dairy barn, Alvin



Peered Through the Leafless Trees

ton, conversing with Marly Benick, and then he kissed her. Alvin thought of how his wife had feared that the helpful, dependable Dayton would soon leave for his home in the next county.

“He will stay and they will marry,” declared Alvin, “and I will be glad to let them have the little cottage, for it solves the farm management. Oh, this golden kissing time! He had his ear attuned to the echo of music reached him from the direction of the house.

“The old organ cracked, broken, pretty well out of commission,” he said nostalgically. “And Nancy’s so-er-loys music. If it takes the last cent I’ve got she shall have a Christmas present worth having,” and the memory of the kiss and the holiday tinge to everything about the business portion of the town influenced an hour of brisk, practical shopping. Then Alvin started homeward, back in the wagon, crissed up was a fine victrola.

He found Nancy strangely excited when he went into the evening meal. More than once her hand went secretly to her dress pocket which held a precious letter she had received that day. Then she began speaking of their daughter Elsa, who had eloped two years ago with Ronald Bruce.

“Alvin, I have heard from Elsa. They are laughing to pay us a visit.”

“They?” repeated Alvin, a deep frown crossing his face.

“Yes, Oh, Alvin, don’t be pitiless! I have heard grand news. Ronald has steadied down. Elsa is so happy. Can’t they come?”

“I shall not exactly abuse them,” he uttered, “but it will not be pleasant to think they ran away.”

“To mend it again, for oh, Alvin! they love the old home, and you and me. They will be here tomorrow ready for Christmas and your life-sing.”

He came into the house just after dusk the next evening and from the parlor proceeded strains of music that told that Nancy was already enjoying the victrola. Then in the darkened hall Alvin stumbled over a baby carriage and then—

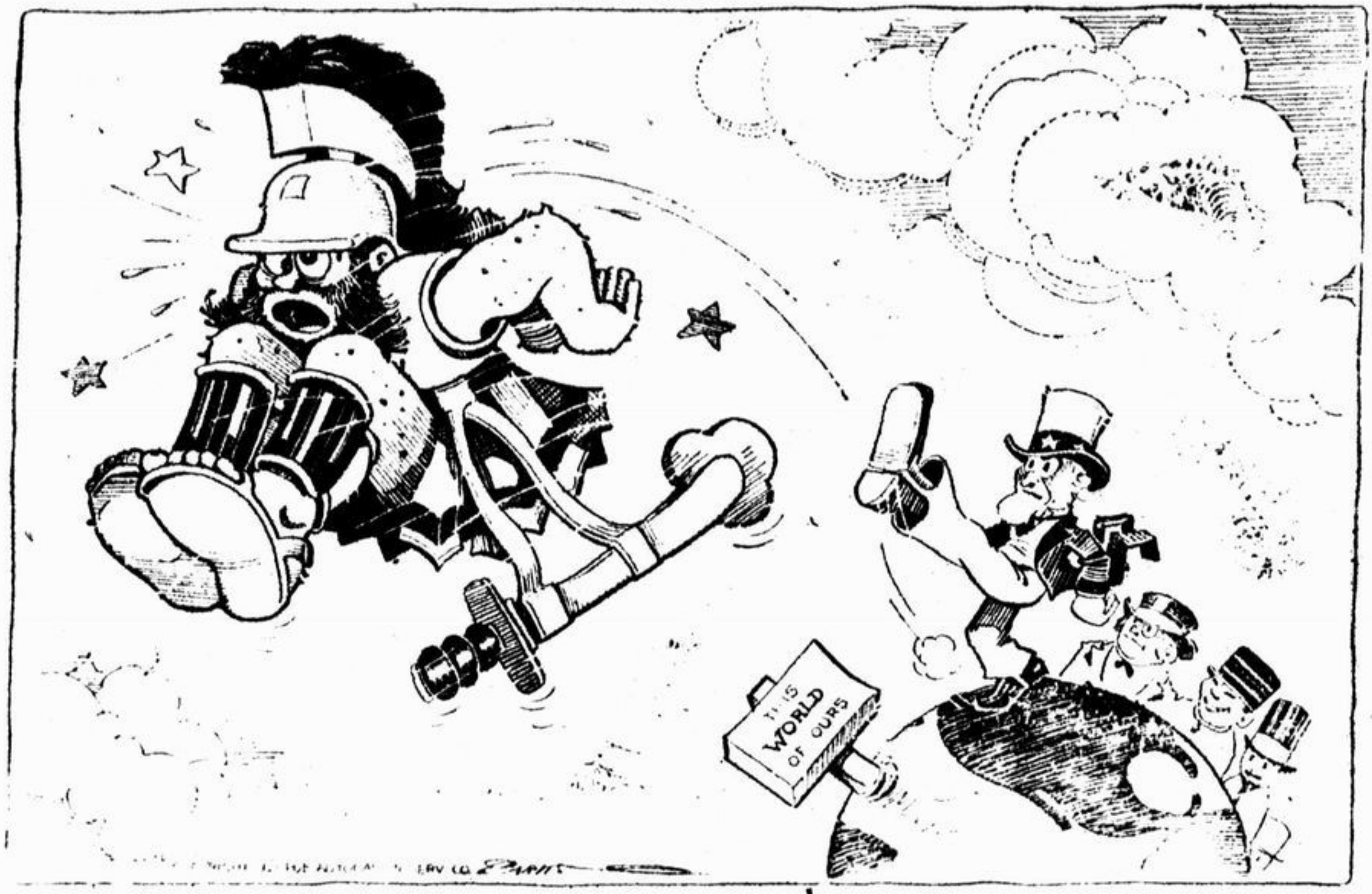
“Oh, Alvin, is that you?” cried out Nancy joyously.

He entered the parlor. It was to stand transfixed as he held towards him a smiling, happy-eyed little child who put her baby arms about his neck and then kissed him.

“Your present, Alvin,” spoke Nancy in a quiver of delight. “Their baby, only a year old—ours,” and Alvin pressed the little treasure to his heart and forgot all the past.

It was a royal Christmas eve and Noble and his fiancée, and even Dayton and Marty were present at a celebration that made kissing time and Christmas time the happiest occasion of their lives.

THE KICK-OFF



Sixty-eight parents and scouts braved the inclement weather last Friday evening to attend the banquet given by Troop Three of the Downers Grove Scouts.

Promptly at six-thirty, Scoutmaster Wildish called his troop to attention and announced the receiving line. Hand shakes and pleasantness having been exchanged, the members of the Bear Patrol accompanied by their parents, were assigned to the place of honor at the head of the big “U” shaped table. The place of honor was additionally marked by a big Bruin cake, the donation of Mrs. Mata Krueger. The remaining Scouts with their parents sat in patrols, each patrol section indicated by patrol flags and pennants in addition to the pretty table decoration.

The banquet was given at the close of an efficiency contest in which the Bear patrol led. To each member of this patrol a scout rope with belt attachment was presented and an overnight hike to the LaGrange cabin in the woods was promised.

The first prize for highest individual efficiency was won by Edward Adams, who received a hugle.

The second prize went to Robert McVitty. He received a mess kit.

At the close of the presentation Miss Gwen Griffiths sang for the boys and was heartily appreciated by them.

Mr. Holzback, Scout Commissioner of the West Suburban Council, was then introduced by Troop Chairman Tizzard. Mr. Holzback gave a brief history of the scouting movement.

Scoutmaster Wildish, who required no introduction, followed with a short talk on scouting and the necessity of cooperation by the parents.

Others to speak were Assistant Scoutmaster Prickett, Troop Chairman T. J. Savage, George Prickett, Chairman of the local Court of Honor and Troop Committeeman Henderson. All speeches were heartily endorsed and spicily flavored by Cheer Leader Timke and the boys.

The Bear Patrol consists of the following members: Herman Krueger, Bill Sievers, Horace Adams, Robert McVitty, Ed. Lawson, Robert Moore and Gordon Mohns.

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A Frog Concert.

As I sat on the piazza that evening, I noticed first an ominous absence of bird voices, and next the presence of a numerous frog population about the little lake close by. The vocal performances of these voluble reptiles began about sunset and increased in volume and power till reaching else-where, he heard. If all the throats in the state had assembled in that spot and sung their hearts, they could not have been heard above the awful volume of frog voices. Olive Thorne Miller.

Strained Music.

The organist at Gloucester cathedral declares that the present vogue of wearing hair over the ears is responsible for a lot of poor singing. His opinion is open to criticism, but it is generally admitted that it would be better if some singers wore the hair over their mouths instead. Eve (London).

The Right Sequence.

“A helpful quotation in a contemporary runs: ‘Tell me my faults and mend your own.’ Before starting any other meeting, let them suppose we first mend the faults so as to get the proper sequence. First, this better: ‘Mend your own faults and then tell me mine.’” Boston Transcript.

Has Same Reaction Always.

A thermometric metal invented in Great Britain is said always to have the same reaction in a strip of given length and thickness for a given temperature change.

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