MERRY CHRISTMAS 1947

Three Minutes of Fiction Fun

By DANIEL F. LINDSAY

Tom Larkin opened the kitchen door. His wife looked up with a hopeful smile as he entered. He just shook his head.

"No mail at all?" she said as she went on fixing dinner.

"Oh, there were a couple of ads and a bill from the seed company." He hung his hat on a hook and crossed to the pump. His white hair was damp around his face when he straightened up again.

"It's just not like Bill," she sighed.

"Bill's got an unforgivin' streak, always did have, even when he was a little feller." Pa's old briar gave off a pungent odor as he lit it.

"But this is different, Tom," she said, putting a pan of biscuits in the oven, "tomorrow is Christmas. It's a long way to the coast. Maybe he wrote but didn't mail it in time."

"Ma," his tired old voice was filled with bitterness, "there's no need to stick pins in yourself by hopin'. Christmas or no Christmas . . . that boy is still mad."

The old lady's eyes shone with faith. "He might stay mad all year long, but when Christmas comes . . . he'll write. I know. I'm his Ma."

"Don't forget," Tom said as he blew smoke at the ceiling. His eyes crinkled at the corners, "Im his father."

"Dinner's ready, Pa," she said, filled with a deep longing and fought to keep the tears out of her voice.

"I c'n understand that boy still bein' mad at me, but why does he have to take it out on you?"

"You're wrong, Tom," Ma replied as she lifted her head and smiled. "The day after Christmas, first delivery, we'll get a letter You'll see."

"Not from him," he shook his head grimly.

"You're forgettin' Judy," she reminded him as they sat down. "She's a good daughter-in-law."

"Oh, I'm not blamin' her," replying as he covered his biscuits with gravy, "Judy's a fine girl. It's his bull-headed pride."

She got up and taking the coffee pot off the cook stove filled his cup. They ate in silence. Finally he pushed his plate back.

"You aren't eatin' much," he scolded.

"I'm just not hungry, Pa."

"I see," he stood up. "I'm goin' out and turn the heater on in the

"She could see Pa striding into the living room."

hen house. It'll be cold tonight." His old shoulders slumped forward as he went outside. She shook her head and started picking up the dishes. Her mind sank back into the past. To the days when Christmas was alive with the excitement and laughter of young voices. She could see Pa striding into the living room bearing a large evergreen on his shoulder. Behind him there was always a highly excited little boy, bearing an axe. She wondered if the little boy ever thought of it.

Pa came back on the porch. She smiled as he kicked his toe against the threshold. It's a wonder, she thought, that there's any threshold left after all these years. He came into the kitchen, dumping an arm load of kindling in the box behind the range.

"Snowin', Pa?"

He shook his head and took off his wraps, replying, "Stopped."

She hung the dish towels up to dry. He pulled a rocker in from the living room and sat down.

"Everything all right in the barn?" Ma asked as she threw a few lumps of coal in the fire.

"Sure," Pa said. A sad smile crossed his lips, "what's the use pretendin', Ma? We're both feelin' blue."

She sat down at the old kitchen table and started peeling apples, uttered, "I know it."

"Gonna bake me a pie?" he asked.

She nodded. "Apple was always Billy's favorite, too."

"Now, Ma, what's the use of . . . ," he stopped as they heard a car drive up in the yard. "Must be Jim Rogers. Said today that new calf of his was sick." He opened the kitchen door and peered out into the night. She could hear him catch his breath as he watched a man and a woman get out. "Ma, who do you think?" his voice was low.

"I knew," Ma laughed as she laid the paring knife down with a happy smile, "I knew it all the time."

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Which!

"Of course, I must ask you for a deposit," said the landlady.

"Certainly," replied the new tenant, handing over the required sum.

"Thanks. Now, shall we trust each other or do you want a receipt?"

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The bringing in of the yule log originated in England during medieval times. The log was dragged into the great hall at the beginning of the Christmas feast and was the occasion of the rendering of the Christmas toast, which is, in part: "This yule log burns. It destroys old hatreds and misunderstandings. Let your envies vanish, and let the spirit of good fellowship reign supreme for this season and through all the year."

The yule log represents "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

Surrounded by myth by primitive peoples, the mistletoe was taken over by Christians who also wove fanciful legends around it.

In ancient mythology, the mistletoe was the instrument of evil. The Druids of Britain believed the plant possessed healing powers. Other primitive people thought that mistletoe found growing on oaks had magical powers.

Taken over into Christian tradition, the mistletoe was dedicated to the Christ Child. Adopted as symbolical of the healing power of our Lord, it was used to adorn the altars at Christmas. Monks of the monasteries called it the "wood of the cross" and attributed supernatural powers to it. The white berries were said to reflect the radiance caught from the guiding star when the Wise Men were led to the manger.

Children's Gifts For Christmas

THERE'S more to buying toys than merely getting something for a youngster to play with.

Home management specialists emphasize five points worth remembering in purchasing playthings for children:

1. Safety. Keeping the age of the child in mind, youngsters should not be given a sharp knife, chemistry set, air rifle or a tool kit until they are old enough to handle them with care. Electric train equipment should be kept in good repair to prevent shock or burn. Infants should be guarded against whistles with removable mouthpieces, stuffed animals with pin or button eyes, wheels and strings not securely fastened, and small nailing.

2. Cleanliness. Toys should lend themselves to being cleaned without damage.

3. Construction. Well made toys are capable of much wear and tear, with fragile playthings encouraging destructiveness in a child.

4. Versatility. A toy that offers many imaginative uses will intrigue a child longer. Blocks of various shapes and sizes have more construction possibilities than the usual sets.

5. Variety. Toys of different sizes, shapes, textures and colors develop different muscles and different kinds of interests.

Too many toys, like no toys at all, are a mistake. The child is distracted by the variety and not given the opportunity to develop the potentialities of the toys he has. It must also be appreciated that the price of a toy does not determine its real value since a cheap plaything may provide a youngster with as much enjoyment as a more expensive one.

A department store Santa Claus listened to a long recital of requests by a tot, assuring her he would do his best to meet her requirements. Before she left, Santa handed her a bright red apple. "What do you want Santa to do now?" her mother asked.

The moppet promptly snapped: "Peel it!"

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THE BREADMAN

The Breadman is an example of the cheerful efficiency which we have come to depend on and which means so much to us. Foul weather or fair, each day brings him to our door to serve our needs.

Men like this, some of Canada's finest, are in the public's service—at *your* service.

DAWES BLACK HORSE BREWERY

One of a series of advertisements in tribute to those Canadians in the service of the public

The Quaker Ful-O-Pep Feed booth was a very busy spot during the Royal Winter Fair. Everyone expressed keen interest in the two valuable heifer calves on display, before being awarded to the two outstanding boys or girls in junior dairy and beef cattle work. Many feeders stopped by to talk about the much discussed feed situation. The general opinion seemed to be that, although things look bad at the moment, most farmers are optimistic and expect a favourable adjustment in prices.

Many farmers made enquiries about the availability of Ful-O-Pep Feeds in their particular districts. Now that supplies are easier we can make more Ful-O-Pep Feeds but as yet we are not at peak production. However, the high quality standard of vitamin-rich Ful-O-Pep Feeds is being maintained regardless of shortages and new developments in the commercial feed picture. Ful-O-Pep feeders are protected because, with Ful-O-Pep, quality aways comes first.

REG'LAR FELLERS—Hold It By GENE BYRNES