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## Christmas in Ierusalem

HE war years found us in odd places. In the mud of Flanders we fancied we heard the Christmas chimes, and dreamt of fire-side and festive fare. The burning sun of the desert scorched us, and made us wish for the snow-covered pastures of old England, or even the murk of a London fog. Back through the years floats a recollection of the land that saw the shepherds follow the guiding star that led them to Bethlehem. It was Christmas in Jerusalem. The night was heavy and threatening. In the old city, guarded by its massive walls, very little was stirring. All day long ceaseless barter had been going on in the arcades. Cold though the weather was, the biting wind that had prevailed all through the day, would appear to have lost itself in its narrow byways, and, giving it up as a bad job, gone out into the wider world to blow to its heart's content, for, here, the somnolent atmosphere of antiquity prevailed untroubled by the winter blasts. A weird place to ramble in the darkness of a Christmas night. A wonderful place in which to conjure strange images. That figure that slides away into the darkness down through the ancient passage called Via Dolorosa, where Christ carried His Cross amid the jeers of the soldiery, he might be a thousand years old for all the change there is in him. Out of the darkness stumbles an old Iew. He looks as ancient as the very walls around, and equally redolent of the past. Up cobbled arcaded lanes one stumbles; the darkness is intense; and then out into a great square where huge cypress trees rise on either hand. The night is more open here, but still dark. Suddenly through a moving wrack of cloud bursts the moon, for seconds only, but, in those seconds, flashes, white in the light, the mighty dome of the Mosque of Omar. For a moment the light rests on the gate where Christ entered the Holy City, while the girls flung flowers in His path, and then all is darkness once again and silence. Silence-except for the guns that have opened out beyond the ramparts. Outside the walls of the old city darkness still reigns supreme; except that the wind and rain are more in evidence, and the thunder of the guns is greater. Few people move in the streets. Now and again comes an anxious enquiry, "Do you think the Turk will come back?" One answers optimistically and the door closes. Moving onward towards your billet, a ruined house on the outskirts, the realization of candles comes to you. Each window boasts a number. They twinkle and sparkle. Every house displays them. Of course!-it is Christmas; Christmas in Jerusalem. And so amid the thunder of the guns you sit down and drink to those at home, to friends and enemies wherever they are, a merry Christmas, even though the toast is drunk in stewed tea.

## Was It Santa Claus or Cupid?

T was Christmas Eve—quite the most glorious Christmas Eve Virginia Ray had ever known. Everything was ready for the party—her party—from the "Merry Christmas" place-cards to the splendid Christmas tree that would be ablaze all evening with little lights and colors.



"HERE COMES DADDY!" — A scene enacted in many Canadian homes daily. To these two children Daddy is the one hero. They think of him all day long and talk about him incessantly, and when the time approaches for his return home from his business they are at the window, with smiling faces, and happy indeed is the one who sees him first and cries "Here comes Daddy." The picture is from a photograph.

Virginia pinned the last red stocking to the mantel, and turned to her mother. "I think it was real mean of George not to offer to play Santa Claus for me," she said. "After his having such a nice costume, too."

"But, dear," her mother answered, "how could he when you quarrelled? I

"I didn't, but of course I would have, if he had been just the least bit nice."

triginal poured, and hurried off to get ready to receive her guests. Her mother, busy with last-minute details, smiled in what might have been reminiscences of her own youth. A few minutes later she went to the phone, held a brief conversation, and as she hung up the receiver she called up the stairs: "Hurry,

dear, I do believe some of your guests are coming."

"I'll be right down," Virginia's voice preceded its owner by only a second.

"Do I look all right, mother?"

"All right," said Mrs. Ray's voice, and her eyes said, "Lovely," and her

heart said, "My own darling!"

Virginia responding to an urgent "burring" admitted her earliest guests

Virginia, responding to an urgent "burring" admitted her earliest guests. Half an hour later, when the rooms were filled with merry, chattering young people, the orchestra struck up the first dance. Escorts led their laughing partners to the centre of the floor, but Virginia did not dance the first number—she had not invited George. Neither had she invited, as her partner, anyone else.

That dance was over, and another and another. The Christmas tree was admired; the mistletoe was found, and put to its proper use; occasional silences made clear the distant sound of carolers; the clock struck ten—eleven—twelve.

At that moment the guests were surprised (and so was Virginia) by the sound of sleighbells, a hearty "Merry Christmas," and the appearance from somewhere near the tree of as jolly a Santa as one could imagine. Near beside him stood Mrs. Ray.

"Why, Mr. Santa Claus, I do believe," and then she presented him to the company. "My old childhood friend, Mr. Santa Claus, has come to pay us a visit, and as he is all loaded down with his various gifts, which must be delivered by tomorrow morning, I suggested that he give any of us who are to receive his attentions our presents now."

"I didn't know, Virginia," said Pudgy Clark, the fat and awkward youth who had stepped on Virginia's toes during the last dance. "I didn't know you believed in Santa Claus."

"I don't!" Virginia snapped. "All right," he laughed, "you needn't bite my head off."

The favors distributed, Mrs. Ray called Virginia. "Here, dear, you and Santa lead the grand march. If you will all follow, I think we might find some refreshments in another room."

"Righto!" said Santa, in a decidedly unfrigid voice. Somehow, Santa knew just where to go. But then, of course, Santa Claus knows everything. He even knew, a few moments later when Virginia excused herself from the party and slipped back to the other room, now in a state of partial disarray,

and (for even the orchestra members were enjoying the repast in the other room) forlorn in its emptiness. Virginia was feeling particularly forlorn and particularly proud.

Santa Claus must know everything, for he knew just how long to wait before he, too, wandered from the merry group and joined Virginia. And he (or was it Cupid?) knew just what to say to make this really the most wonderful

must have told Virginia, for presently she said: "I know, I know;" and she had cheered up quite a bit before he put his arm around her. Somehow she wasn't so forlorn—nor quite so proud.

After a while they walked over to the tree together, and they listened to the carolers; and then, somehow, they stopped right under the mistletoel What George said was whispered in her ear, so we shall never know, but Virginia was

Christmas Eve in all Virginia's life. Just what it was, I am not sure, but he

laughing as she answered him.

"Why, George," she said, "how dare you say I don't believe in Santa
Claus?"

Suid Study Study

Tiny Tim's Carol

shoulders show there is still that on earth which he loves. Taken from life.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS from the air-Now we know who sends the snow to us in the early morning of

the day of all days. These youthful aviators wear on their faces the unconcerned look, when up in the air, of

veterans; yet they are too young to have been long accustomed to high flights. The faded leaves over the boy's

"OD bless us every one," prayed Tiny Tim. Crippled and dwarfed in body, yet so tall Of soul, we tiptoe earth to look on him High towering over all.

He loved the loveless world, not dreamed, indeed, That it, at best, could give to him the while But pitying glances, when his only need Was but a cheery smile.

And thus he prayed, "God bless us every one!" Enfolding all the creeds within the span



Of his child heart, and so, despising none, Was nearer saint than man.

I like to fancy God, in Paradise, Lifting a finger over the rhythmic swing Of chiming harp and song, with eager eyes Turning earthward, listening.

The anthem stilled—the angels leaning there
Above the golden walls—the morning sun
Of Christmas bursting flower-like with the prayer—
'God bless us every one!'



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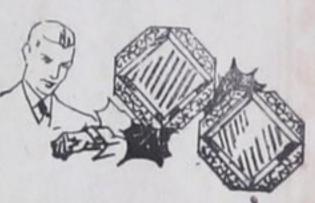
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