The Acton Free Press
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1929

SONG FOR CHRISTMAS

Chant me a rhyme for Christmas—
Sing me a joyful song—
And though it is filled with laughter,
Let it be pure and strong.

Sing of the hearts brimmed over
With the story of the day—
And the echo of childish voices
That will not die away.

Of the blare of tasseled bugles,
And the timeless clatter and beat
Of the drum that throbs the muster
Of squadrons of scampering feet.

And oh! let your voice fall fainter
Till blent with a minor tone
You temper your song with the beauty
Of the pity Christ hath shown.

And sing one verse for the voiceless,
And yet ere the song be done
The verse for the ears that hear not
And a verse for the sightless one.

For though it be time for singing
A merry Christmas glee,
Let a low sweet voice of pathos
Run through the melody.
—Jas. Whitcomb Riley.

Chronicles of Ginger Farm

Written Specially for The Free Press by GWENDOLINE P. CLARKE

Neighbors, doesn't it often strike you what a nice old world this is and how delightful are some of the people whom one meets? You know as we go along Life's way how we often dislike moving on to a strange place because of the old friends we must leave behind and then after a time we make new friends and they in their turn become old friends and so it goes on right through the years until the time comes when we look back and think ourselves rich indeed because of the people we have known and loved. It takes a little time perhaps to recognise the gold from the dross and sometimes we get badly taken in and oh, in such cases how it hurts to find our trust has been misplaced—many and many a time we find a goodly apple rotten at the core, but that need not necessarily embitter us or make us unduly sceptical of our friends and acquaintances. You know in a court of law a person is considered innocent until they are proved guilty. Isn't that a principle which might quite be adopted in social life, especially among neighbors? But I am afraid we are a little to inclined—generally on some one else's say-so to consider a person guilty without even giving them the chance to prove themselves otherwise. What exactly started this train of thought I hardly know unless it is that just recently I seem to be forever coming across little kindnesses in unexpected places. Not much perhaps—a thought here and a word there—but always enough to leave a glow of happiness and a feeling of appreciation that after all this is a good old world and a jolly old world and the people in it are the best ever!

Well each day brings us nearer to Christmas and how many are ready for it? I wish I could say I was but I never am and I don't suppose I ever shall be. [illegible]

The Free Press Short Story

"THE OTHER WISE MAN"

YOU have all heard the story of the Three Wise Men of the East. You remember how they travelled from the far away country to offer gifts and to worship the baby in the manger-cradle in Bethlehem. But have you ever heard of the "Other Wise Man" who also saw the star and who also set out to follow it, but who did not arrive with his brethren. Dr. Henry Van Dyke tells the story of this Other Wise Man—of his longing to see the child who was to save his people; of how he wandered here and there in all countries in search of the Christ, and the strange way in which he found him.

It was the time when Augustus Caesar was the great Roman Emperor, and when Herod was king of Jerusalem. In a city among the mountains of Persia, there lived a man named Artaban. He lived in a beautiful building surrounded by gardens of flowers and fruits. It was a night in September when Artaban stood in the doorway to welcome his guests. Artaban was a tall, dark man, forty years old, with bright eyes, a broad forehead, a strong face, which showed that he was a good thinker and a man who would carry out any plan upon which he might decide. He wore a robe of pure white wool and a white pointed cap. His hair was black and long. He was dressed as a priest, one of the Magi, called the fire-worshippers. His nine guests came, one by one, all dressed in costly garments, and were cordially received by their host in the doorway. Then they went into a room, at the further end of which was a black altar on which was burning a small fire. They took their places about the altar, and Artaban began to chant a hymn in which all joined, as was the custom in their worship. Then Artaban invited his guests to be seated while he explained to them the reason for calling them together. He told of how he had for years been searching for truth,—something better and higher than their belief. Now he had studied with three other of the Magi—the Wise Men—how they had read all the ancient writings—prophecies of the old Hebrew writers. That they had found promise that one should be born King of Israel who would show what was Truth and all that is pure and holy; that these prophecies all referred to that very time. That he and his friends had also studied the stars and had seen a wonderful sign a few months before when a new star shone brightly for one night and then vanished. That this night was the night when it should again appear. That his three friends were watching in their country, Babylonia, and he, here in Persia, for the sign. If it should again appear, the his friends would wait ten days for him at the Temple, and then they would set out together to see and worship the promised one.

[illegible]

all because he had stayed on his journey to show mercy.

The Other Wise man sold his sapphire and collected a caravan, but much precious time was used. Then we see him travelling across the scorching sands of the desert, through Damascus, past the blue waters of the lake of Galilee, down the valley of the Jordan, through the hills of Judah, until he arrived at Bethlehem. And it was three days after the Three Wise men had come and had found Mary and Joseph, with the young child Jesus, and had laid at his feet their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. Then the Other Wise Man drew near, weary, but full of hope for now, he thought, he would find the King and offer his two gems, the ruby and the pearl. The streets seemed deserted, but as he passed a hut he heard a woman's voice singing softly, hushing her baby to sleep. He entered, and she told him how but three days before, three strangers from the East had appeared, saying that a star had guided them to the place where Joseph of Nazareth was staying with his wife and their new born child, and how they had worshipped the child and given rich gifts. How they had disappeared as suddenly as they had come. That Joseph had taken his wife and baby and fled at night, in secret, some thought to Egypt. That ever since, a feeling of coming evil had hung over the town, for they had heard that Roman soldiers were coming.

Artaban thought that this child must be the King whom he had come to see and now he must follow to Egypt. But suddenly a wild confusion was heard down the street. Cries and shrieks, bi women's voices, the sounds of trumpets, the clashing of swords, and the wild cry: "The soldiers! The soldiers of Herod! They are killing our children!"

The young mother's face grew white with terror, and she grasped her baby in her arms, and crouched in the darkest corner. But Artaban went quickly and stood in the doorway, and filling the whole space with his broad shoulders. The soldiers came hurrying down the street, their hands and swords dripping with blood. But at the sight of the stranger, they stopped in surprise. The captain came, but dared not enter. Then Artaban said in a low voice, "I am alone here, and waiting to give this jewel to the captain who will leave me in peace." Then he showed the gleaming ruby and the captain took it and ordered his soldiers to move on. [illegible]

Years roll by and we catch only occasional glimpses of Artaban in his search for the one who was to be King. We see him among the throngs in Egypt. We see him at the foot of the great pyramids still looking into the silent face of the Sphinx. [illegible]

done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me." The voice ceased. A radiance of wonder and joy spread over the face of Artaban. A long breath of relief and peace came gently from his lips.

"His journey was ended. His treasures were accepted. The Other Wise Man had, at last, found the King."—Adapted by G. W. Taylor, from "The Blue Flower" by Henry Van Dyke.

WET BLANKETS

"Glorious, glorious—what a view!" said Piggot and I to each other as we stood on the terrace of Kendrick's new house in the country.

"Why, that's Tisbury Beacon over there, isn't it?" I asked as Kendrick joined us.

"Yes," he replied. "That's bad. When you can see the Beacon, that means rain. The same with the church tower on your left. There'll be bad weather ahead whenever that is visible."

"But it's fine now," we protested. "And it looks as if it were going to last."

"No, no, not for long," he said. "You'll see I'm right."

Of course he was. People like that always are. In an hour, the clouds had banked up, shut out everything and settled down to create a record in rainfall. Kendrick was triumphant and hearty. No sitting indoors and playing mah jong or reading a book. No; we whistled for the dogs, we found nobbly sticks, we put on thick boots and hot mackintoshes and prepared to tramp.

Kendrick began giving my wife a resume of his last speech at the village political meeting, whereby he proved that women are not really men's equals. Piggot and I fell behind. Piggott was angry. He considered I had not given him sufficient support. He hated rain and hated walking, and pretended that if I had only helped him we might have avoided both.

The rain redoubled its vigor. Kendrick quickened his pace. We followed morosely. When Piggott burst out:

"Kendrick wanted it to rain. He likes it raining. He made it rain this morning by moving all those hills and things near. He said it rained when the hills looked near, solely to gratify his sense of importance as a prophet. People who've just taken a house in the country are always like that. They want to show they keep in touch with Mother Nature."

As it was Kendrick's salt that had flavored our boiled eggs at breakfast, I tried to create a diversion but Piggott would have none of it.

"Talk about advertisement hoardings spoiling the countryside," he continued, "these dismal prophets are just as bad, if not worse. There's not a headland or picturesque landmark anywhere that they don't spoil by turning it into a regular wet blanket, a sign of rain. It's lucky for them the practice of carrying arms has died out."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Because, if it had not, some exasperated person would run them through. You know that story about Romulus and Remus?"

"About one killing the other because he saw more vultures from the top of a hill?"

"They got the story wrong. What happened really was, 'By Jove, I can see the Alban Hills—that means rain,' replied the other, 'As that means rain,' Whereupon Romulus out with his sword and finished him."

Some six months later Kendrick came to London, having acquired country cottage for a week-end. Sunday was a lovely day. We took rugs and hammocks into the orchard and lay basking in the sun. From afar came the sounds of bells.

"Listen," I said. "Church bells."

"Piggott's face fell. "That's too bad," he muttered. "Whenever you can hear church bells it's bound to rain."

"Yes," I did not need adding. Piggott [illegible] with alive.

Many have been relieved of corns by Holloway's Corn Remover. It has a power of its own that will be found effective.

WHO HAS THE MOST TO DO?

[illegible]

CLOCKS AND TIME-TABLES

"Oh, well," said Mrs. Binns, with an expressively indulgent smile, "Luella Pressey!"

"I know," assented Mrs. Peters. "Of course, being a Pressey, you'd expect Luella to lose any train, if she didn't board a wrong one instead; but I must say, just now with standard time and daylight saving, and the station clock saying one thing every time you look out the window, and your own clock contradicting it every time you look up at the mantelpiece, it's pretty mixy for anybody, Pressey or not. I went up to Boston myself last week. When I got there the waiting-room clock told me I'd arrived seven minutes before I started. You could have knocked me over with a feather!"

Everyone laughed, except Mrs. Odlin who snorted.

"Your experiences always do make quite a story, the way you put them, Lydia," she said, "but a moment's entertainment cannot obscure the facts. The matter is quite simple. A mind of merely elementary intelligence, one would think, might grasp the fact of an hour's difference between home time and travelers' time. An even hour is perfectly easy to reckon. If there were odd minutes, now, confusion might be excusable—but an even hour! My niece Isabel went home to-day, as you perhaps know, after visiting me for a week; it is the first time she has travelled alone, and some foolish person (Mrs. Odlin swept an accusing eye round the shrinking sewing circle), some exceedingly foolish person, had been worrying her about clocks and time-tables. Most annoying. The child is of an absurdly nervous temperament, not at all like my side of the house. Resembles her mother, whom poor Thomas never should have married. Well, she was so upset and flustered that I had to set my foot down firmly. 'Isabel,' I told her, 'this will not do; control yourself. Everything has been properly planned, timed and arranged for you beforehand. You need merely remain calm and do as you have been told. Do not notice clocks at all. Take a taxi directly across town from your train to the boat; there is ample time. You have your ticket, and you need simply to get aboard when you reach the wharf and you will have no trouble at all.' I succeeded in reassuring her completely, and she was entirely comfortable in her mind when I saw her off, just before coming to the meeting. If an inexperienced young thing like Isabel, when properly instructed, can travel without apprehension or confusion—"

Mrs. Bonney, who had been doing a difficult corner that was inclined to pucker, had apparently only half listened, but she caught at a word.

"The boat!" she echoed, absently; then in more alert tones she repeated, "The boat! But, Lucretia, the boat will have gone. It runs on daylight-saving time, not railroad time."

"Impossible!" gasped Mrs. Odlin.

"No. I've a cousin in the company's office, and I know I'm right. Good gracious, Lucretia! Do try to be calm. It's trying, but it isn't tragedy. It's a ticket wasted, and that's a pity, but—"

Mrs. Odlin had risen with a majestic vehemence that overturned a cutting table and upset a work-basket, and that spurted before her feet a flight of rolling spools.

"My bonnet," she demanded wildly. "My wrap! Where is my umbrella? My purse! No, I did not wear overshoes. My bonnet—yes, yes, I perceive I have it on. My poor, dear Isabel! I must take the next train! I must—thank you, but these gloves are not mine—I—"

"Lucretia Odlin," said Mrs. Bonney, decisively, "sit down. You're making a spectacle of yourself. Isabel can easily be reached on the train—she can't get to town for another half hour—and told what to do. Sit down!"

Mrs. Odlin sat down.

"Railroad time is different from our time, Lucretia," put in Mrs. Beebe, comfortingly, looking at the clock. "Remember, she has a full hour extra."

"Almira," said Mrs. Bonney, "you mean well, but don't be an idiot. Lucretia, there's my telephone. Call up the telegraph office and telegraph to Isabel on the train care of the conductor."

"How can I telegraph," lamented Mrs. Odlin, distracted, "when I don't know which is telegraph time, and I don't know anybody?"

Mrs. Bonney paused a moment to [illegible] "I'll do it for you, if you want," she said, "what do you want her to do? Take the next train back, or go on home by rail instead of by boat? That could be arranged."

"Oh, tell her to sit right there in the station," said Mrs. Odlin, earnestly, "and not budge till the next train is ready, and then take it and come straight back here to me. I'll keep her over Sunday. I needn't be anybody, and Monday—no, I can't go up myself next week, I simply can not. I'll put her in charge of somebody responsible, if I have to hire the person [illegible] she can't be trusted to travel alone. Isabel must have a guardian; poor thing; it is unfortunate, but necessary."

[illegible] "I believe Luella Pressey to be a most sensible young woman," observed Mrs. Peters. [illegible]

THE SENSE OF OBLIGATION

[illegible]

HEEDLESS WRONG

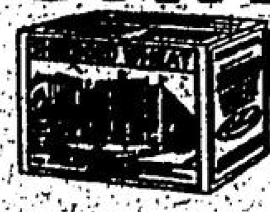
There has been much complaint, and with ample cause, of the harsh treatment which incoming ocean passengers receive from the government officials who examine their baggage. Just now comes the pleasant announcement that the rigor of those proceedings is to be relaxed.

But not all the wrong has been on one side. The same low standard of citizenship which makes men hide their property from the assessor of taxes has led thoughtless Americans, who go abroad and make purchases, to justify the practice of smuggling and corrupting the officers.

But they who give and they who take a bribe are parties to an act of dishonesty. "It is as wicked to cheat the post-office as to cheat a friend," said the noble old President Wayland. We may apply that formula to all departments of government. To defraud the revenue is to defraud the whole people.

Where was Soloman's temple?
On the side of his head.

READY IN TWO MINUTES!
A HOT NOURISHING BREAKFAST



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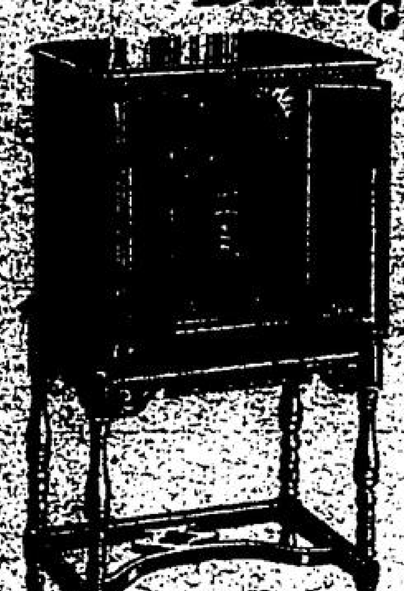

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