

The Free Press Christmas Story

SCROOGE --- 1940

By GWENDOLINE P. CLARKE

WILLIAM ANDERSON BRAINTREE relaxed comfortably in his lounge chair, drawn up beside the blazing electric fire in his study. He felt an inward glow of satisfaction at the comfort of his home this Christmas Eve—he thought of it as concrete evidence of his success as a business man. Not only was he known as being progressive in business, he was also recognized as an outstanding figure in public life. He had served his town as mayor for nine consecutive years. He was president of the political party no one favored; he was vice-president of the hospital board; honorary president of the British-Canadian Club and founder and honorary president of the Local Improvement Society. He was an elder of his church and his name invariably headed the list of charitable and religious subscription lists. His employees were well treated, each one received a bonus at Christmas—plus a turkey, in the case of married men.

Small wonder then, that William Anderson Brintree reviewed his standing as a citizen—and relaxed comfortably in his chair.

Mr. Brintree was also a temperate man. He was, in fact, a total abstainer—except for such occasions when he was afflicted with bad head colds. At such times he had recourse to the bottle of medicinal whiskey which, in case his motives might be misunderstood, he kept out of sight at the back of his desk. And it must be added, Mr. Brintree was a great sufferer from head colds.

Mr. Brintree was a widower—a childless widower—and employed a housekeeper, in the person of Mrs. Chappell. That was about all people knew of him—what he did, or where he lived, before starting business in Newberry was still a mystery.

Mr. Brintree reached forward and dialed the radio. "Ah—ha—Dickens' Christmas Carol! Well, I guess it would not be Christmas without it. Miserable fellow, that old Scrooge... deserves all the punishment he got. Ah—choo!—ah—choo!—Bless my soul—another cold! Now where did I get that? Well, well—nothing like nipping things in the bud... an ounce of prevention... and his eyes involuntarily travelled towards his desk. No doubt Mrs. Chappell left a kettle on in the kitchen—she always likes a cup of tea when she comes in at night."

Yes, the kettle was on, and so, in a little while, William Anderson Brintree, teetotaler and philanthropist, was comfortably relaxed in his chair again, sipping his preventive medicine with conscientious deliberation. The radio continued the story of the Christmas Carol. Now Scrooge was visiting the home of Tiny Tim... the wind howled... chains rattled... the spirit's eerie voice wailed through the room. Mr. Brintree, shivered—swallowed the rest of his negus at one gulp, and drew his chair closer to the warmth and comfort of the fire.

"Awful wind that... I hear some- thing rattling—must be a shutter loose somewhere... short sighted chap—that man Scrooge. Keep employees satisfied—that's the stuff... result—more work, better returns. That's good business."

"Confound that shutter. Huh—Scrooge—miser, bad business. William Anderson Brintree—benevolent, successful. Ah—ha, Mr. Scrooge—there's a big gap between you and me."

"You are mistaken, William Anderson Scrooge!"

"Who said that? My name's not Scrooge! Confound that wind—and that cursed radio—making me hear voices that aren't there."

"William Scrooge!" the voice repeated, as a thin shadowy form presently took shape before the astonished William's eyes.

"Who are you? Are you the ghost from the Christmas Carol? You have no business here with me. Go—go away. Insisted Mr. Brintree, angrily.

"I am not a ghost of the past—I am not concerned with the past. I am a guardian of the Present!"

"A guardian of the present—then why are you here? My name is Brintree—William Anderson Brintree. There must be some mistake—you have no business here with me!"

The spirit sighed—and his sight was like an icy blast chilling the room.

"Yes, to the people of Newberry you are William Brintree. You are the big man of the town. You give largely—you would know you are generous and big-hearted. You want to be known as a friend of the poor; as a righteous, God-fearing man. But to me you are Scrooge—Scrooge 1940."

"But why, spirit, why? What have I done?"

"Have you not a mother?"

"Yes—but..."

"Have you not a father?"

"Yes, but I..."

"Quiet, Scrooge, quiet. Now it is my turn to talk—and your turn to listen. I would have you know that there is more than one kind of meanness. The first Scrooge was guilty of ONE; you are guilty of another—the worst kind of meanness."

The Sunday School Lesson

FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22nd.

SHARING THE SHEPHERDS' JOY (Christmas Lesson)

Golden Text.—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.—Luke 2: 14. Lesson Text.—Luke 2: 8-20. Time.—B.C. 5. Place.—Bethlehem. Exposition.—I. The King Despised: Seven hundred years before, Micah had prophesied that He that was "to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting," was to come out of Bethlehem (Micah 5: 2). Note how many decrees and deeds of men, entirely unconscious of God's purpose and prophecy, worked together to fulfill God's Word and carry out His eternal plan. The Saviour of the world, the Christ, the Lord, began in a stable the life, He was to close upon the cross. There, was "no room" for Him in the inn, there is "no room" for Him today in the hearts of most men, in the home, in business, in society, in politics. It was not that the inn was hostile; it was simply preoccupied. That is the trouble in men's hearts to-day.

II. The King Honored.

The announcement of the advent of the King was made to shepherds. The shepherds proved their fitness to receive the announcement (v. 15). They were men of faith, with a deep appreciation of spiritual truth, in spite of their lowly position. They seem to have been waiting, longing, looking, for the coming of the Christ (v. 16). They were faithfully attending to their lowly duties when the revelation came. It was not pleasant work, but it was their work, and while at it the angels met them (cf. Ex. 3: 1; Jud. 6: 11, 12; 1 Kings 19: 19). The glory that shone around them was the ancient Shekinah that betokened God's presence. The shepherds were "sore afraid" when they beheld this glory. The supernatural, by bringing God near, always fills the heart of sinful man with fear (Rev. 1: 17; Luke 5: 8; Isa. 6: 5). But the angelic message at once dispelled all fear. They came to announce salvation, not judgment. They began with one of God's most frequent messages to men, "fear not." It is evident that God longs for a fearless people. But the angels not only bade them "fear not," but brought forward the only real cure for fear, the Gospel. They brought "good tidings of great joy," the coming of Jesus the Saviour, Christ, and Lord, is the best news this old sin-cursed and Satan-governed world ever heard. But many, even to this day, do not receive it as "good tidings of great joy." Do you?

The Gospel the angel proclaimed was a Saviour BORN, but that Gospel has for us been developed into a Saviour not only born but crucified for our sins, dead buried, risen and coming again (1 Cor. 15: 1-4; Acts 1: 11). It was a strange place to be sent to see a king, a barn. And it was a strange sign to see "a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord," a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. The world receives this wonderful proclamation to this day with indifference, but the heavenly army received it with exultant shouts of praise to God. Well they might! The word "suddenly" shows that they could hardly restrain themselves until the message was fully delivered. They all but interrupted their spokesman's proclamation with their glad chorus. There was to be a twofold result of the Saviour's birth—"glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of his good pleasure." Study out from the Bible who the men in whom God is well pleased are, and in what sense Jesus brings them peace (John 6: 29; Eph. 1: 6, 7; Rom. 5: 1; John 14: 27; Phil. 4: 6, 7).

III. The New-born King Welcomed. The shepherds, though humble and illiterate, were wise men. They showed it by believing God's Word and going to see for themselves the glorious truth that had been proclaimed to them. Of the truth of what had been told them they had not a doubt. They spoke of it as "this thing (or word), which is COME TO PASS." Wise and happy the man who, when God tells him anything, counts it done (Luke 1: 45; John 20: 29). They knew it was so because the Lord had made it known, that is faith (Heb. 11: 1; R.V. See context). They did not "go" to test the truth of the Word of God, but to "see" what they already fully believed. When God makes any great fact or truth known to us we should at once believe it and then "go and see this word" which the Lord hath made known to us—i.e., enter into it experimentally. Note the eagerness and wholeheartedness of these shepherd-saints, "they came with haste."

"They came with haste" to find the Christ, but to-day men will scarce come at all; and, if they do, come, it is with such reluctance that they must be urged and reasoned with and plead with and almost pulled to the Saviour's feet. The shepherds were rare souls. They found it all just as God said it would be (v. 16; cf. v. 20, R.V.; cf. ch. 19: 32; Acts 27: 25). They told it out to others (v. 17). Highly privileged though they had been, they went right back to their humble occupation. They glorified and praised God as they went.

IV.—The Shepherds Witnessing for Christ. They did not keep to themselves the good news. They told only that "which was spoken to them." Christ was the whole subject of their testimony. Their testimony awakened little, besides wonder with most. Mary "kept" in her heart and "pondered" all these wonderful revelations. That is the way to deal with

The Canadian War Effort

A Weekly Review of Developments Along the Home Front—December 8th-12th

1. Parliament adjourned December 6th. Royal assent given to emergency budget to conserve foreign exchange. Commons resumes February 17th; Senate, March 4th, subject to earlier recall in event of emergency.

2. Canadian destroyer "Saguenay" struck by torpedo while engaging enemy submarine in Eastern Atlantic. "Saguenay" reached port safely and is now undergoing repairs. Twenty-one ratings reported—missing. Eighteen ratings wounded and in hospital.

"Till repairs to "Saguenay" concluded, Canada's destroyer strength is reduced to 11. When war began, Canada had seven destroyers.

3. Brigadier General G. Eric McCuaig transferred from O.C. Petawawa camp to O.C. Borden camp. Colonel Walter Hyde, Montreal, appointed commandant at Petawawa.

Camp Borden is now largest camp in Dominion.

4. Contracts awarded by the Department of Munitions and Supply during week ended November 29th amounting to 2,149 and totalled \$77,563,421.

5. November subscriptions to Dominion of Canada non-interest bearing certificates were \$589,091. To November 30th, sales of non-interest bearing certificates totalled \$3,407,262.

6. Second contingent of Canadians trained under Empire Training Scheme arrives in Great Britain.

Some members of first contingent of Canadians to graduate under Empire scheme already reported in action over German-held territory.

7. Loren L. Brown, Deputy Timber Controller, appointed Timber Controller of Department of Munitions and Supply. H. R. MacMillan, Timber Controller, since the office was established in June, now devotes full attention to his duties as Chairman of the Wartime Requirements Board.

8. Royal Canadian Air Force revises recruiting methods. New system, with seventeen recruiting areas, will make it unnecessary for volunteers to travel long distances to make application.

9. Economic activity reached a higher level in Canada during the first ten months of 1940 than in any other period in history. Dominion Bureau of Statistics index of the physical volume of business on the base of 1926 averaged 143.5 against 120 in the corresponding period of 1939, a gain of 19.4 per cent.

10. Fall in butter stocks under examination by Wartime Prices Board Creamery butter holdings and carloads in transit on December 1st, according to Dominion Bureau of Statistics, totalled 42,288,220 pounds, being 7,600,000 less than at same date last year. 11,200,000 less than in 1938 but 4,000,000 more than holdings on December 1st, 1937.

God's Word. The shepherds were true and wise men. May we, like them, believe implicitly, act promptly and wait for nothing when the path of duty is clear, ceasing not to give praise for the great and wonderful gift vouchsafed us at Bethlehem—God made manifest in the flesh!

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"A Western Fantasy"



On Christmas night at 10.00 to 10.30 p.m. (EDST), the Winnipeg studios of the CBC will give a new Canadian work its radio premiere. "A Western Fantasy," a radio play set to music, was written by John Kannawin, former producer on CBC's Toronto staff and more recently stationed in Winnipeg, where he has just been appointed Representative of the Prairie Region.

The fantasy, which has been given its musical setting by Hugh Bancroft, well-known western composer and organist, was inspired by the author's first glimpse of one of the West's most typical scenes—that of a young immigrant girl standing in a field of golden grain.

Pictured above are John Kannawin, author of "A Western Fantasy," and those who will be associated with him in its production on Christmas night. Left to right, top: Ralph Roberts, tenor; Geoffrey Waddington, who will conduct the augmented orchestra and choir; Hugh Bancroft, composer of the music; Miriam Dugan, contralto, who will sing the role of the heroine. Below, left: Stanley Hoban, baritone; centre, two typical prairie princesses at harvest time and right, John Kannawin.

MERRY CHRISTMAS to All. All Specials Until Dec. 25. Christmas Mixed CANDY 2 lb. 25c. Loring's Creams and JELLIES 15c. 16c. Jelly Beans or GUM DROPS 15c. 13c. Denver Assorted CANDY 15c. 16c. Loring's Melrose CHOCOLATES 15c. 27c. Doerr's CHOC. DROPS 15c. 15c. Mixed (in shell) NUTS 15c. 19c.

BRAZIL NUTS 15c. 17c. PECAN NUTS 15c. 21c. WALNUTS Budded 15c. 25c. TABLE FIGS 15c. 14c. JELL-O 2 pkgs. 13c. ORANGE PEEL 15c. 27c. LEMON PEEL 15c. 27c. CITRON PEEL 15c. 31c. CINNAMON 2 oz. 5c. Loose Pack McLaren's OLIVES 27-oz. jar 31c. Carroll's Rich Old CHEESE 15c. 25c. Carroll's Dandee COFFEE 15c. 32c.

Bright's Canadian Peaches 15-oz. tin 10c. Catarac Dry Ginger Ale 2 lg. btl. 19c. Deposit Extra.

MINCEMEAT Maple Leaf 2 lb. 25c. NIBLETS CORN 14-oz. tin 11c. PEAS Green Giant 2 16-oz. tins 25c. ASPARAGUS TIPS 12-oz. tin 15c. SALAD FRUITS 15-oz. tin 19c. Poultry Dressing 14c. Almond Icing 1/2 lb. tin 19c. Wintergreen Cake Candies 15c. 32c. Shelled Walnuts 1/2 lb. 10c. SHORTENING Lowal 2 lb. 25c. Miracle Whip Kraft 32-oz. jar 49c. Walnut Fruit Cake 39c. Cowan's Cocoa 1-lb. tin 24c. Woodbury's Soap 4 cakes 29c. TOMATO JUICE Libby's 19-oz. tin 7c. CHOC. GRAHAMS 15c. 19c. FRUIT CAKE Dark or Light 15c. 35c. PUDDINGS Fruited Ea. 25c. "MAGIC" Baking (each and 16-oz. Powder carry) tin 28c.

27c. NAVEL ORANGES 220 size—Doz.—176 Size 35c. Choice Emperor GRAPES 2 lb. 25c. Firm CRANBERRIES, per lb. 29c. Crisp Green or White CELERY HEARTS 2 for 23c.

CARROLL'S

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