



"DO YOU STILL THINK 'CHARGE IT' IS SUCH A MAGIC WORD?"

**Chronicles of ..  
Ginger Farm**

Written Specially for  
The Acton Free Press  
GWENTHOLINE F. CLARKE

**A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL.** A very happy Christmas.

Maybe right at the moment you are not quite ready to exchange Christmas greetings perhaps you have been so busy picking geese or turkeys, or just chickens or maybe just chopping or baking, so that you feel that the best present anyone could wish you or give you would be a chance to sit down and relax. And yet, you know, I believe there is a special brand of energy comes with the Christmas season. There must be because without it I don't believe we could ever get through! And I suppose there are times when we think that in this day and age Christmas isn't what it used to be. Every thing being so commercialized you wonder if there is any of the old Christmas spirit left. And yet in our hearts we know it is still there. The one thing that endures through wars and strikes, crises and upheavals, through it all the Christmas spirit lives on. We may have our problems, the exchange of presents may be few, trouble beyond our control come to distract us, yet we find the manifestation of kindness and goodwill in the most unexpected places.

Yes, it is there, even in the department store where you shop. By a chance remark you discover that the salesclerk who helps you choose the right kind of building blocks for Billy, is a young mother, working during the rush season so that her Tommy may also have a real Christmas. The high cost of living leaving precious little margin for such extras.

And young folk, working away from home, hear Bing Crosby, still "dreaming of a white Christmas", and as they listen something happens to that thin surface of sophistication which they carry around with them. They think of home of Mum and Dad and the young kids and they remember that at home Christmas was always the grandest time. It might be a good idea to cut that party Saturday night and take the early bus home that would sure please the folks all right.

The Christmas spirit, free and untroubled, is heard in the fun and laughter of the wee folk. The young lad with his nice, new sleigh, the small girl with her go-to-sleep dill, proof positive that their faith in Santa Claus was not misplaced. Surely God, in his infinite understanding, must smile and be content that his little children should have their Santa Claus for this brief period in their lives.

To Grandpa the Christmas spirit is obvious in his children's thought for his comfort on this day of days even though his voice quavers a little more than usual as his grandchildren bring him their little gifts of love. He sits back, quietly content, except that he wishes Bess could be with him to watch the young ones at play. How she would love the grandchildren she never lived to know.

At the school concert something happens to you. It may be the Christmas spirit, or again it may be the heat or the noise, but somehow a lump comes into your throat as you listen to the lisping voice of a small child singing with unquestioning simplicity.

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed

The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head."

And then you come home, and maybe you pause for a minute before turning in, and you look up at the starry sky and in the crisp stillness of the night you feel the

spirit of Christmas. It is there all around you, alive and indestructible. You hear it later in the church bells as they ring out the glad tidings, "Joy to the world the Lord is come."

You hear it again in those dear familiar carols "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" "Noel, Noel Christians Awake."

And it comes to you again, on your knees, in the quiet sanctuary of your church, particularly if it is a little country church.

And I hope, too, that you who read, can feel the spirit of Christmas, of friendliness and goodwill, of sympathy and understanding that comes to you from Ginger Farm through the medium of this column. If I have failed in this then it might better not have been written.

A whole dictionary of words could not convey my wish to you any better than this one simple message "A Happy Christmas to you all" and in the words of Tiny Tim "God Bless us every one."

**EVEN THE WEATHER**

The Weather itself is getting different. The Southern ice cap is growing wildly and the Northern one is melting down to its mammoth bones. This change in the weather is the latest upset to man's sense of security. Think back if you are old enough to the years before the first world war. The successive shocks since then have grown in frequency and size until they are calling this half way point of the atomic century the pre-war world, and the post-Christian era.

Man's tragedy is that he understands too much. He can hope and pray. And he can try to get along with his fellows on the earth. The troubles of mankind are so vast it is the ultimate in madness that the various groups and individuals should quarrel, like passengers fighting in a falling plane. Man, the quick-eyed jungle creature, unasily come from his tree, is now after all these thousands of years lord of the earth. He has just put down all his enemies except himself, and except the universe. While other stars than his sun blow up and while the ice caps of his planet shift, he plans a war. How Dean Swift would purse his lips at this confirmation of his low opinion of mankind.

We could do much yet to save ourselves. The world still turns and it is beautiful. Humans dwell upon it. Let us shake the dark jungle out of our minds and turn to thoughts of how to die but how to live. — *The Printed Word*

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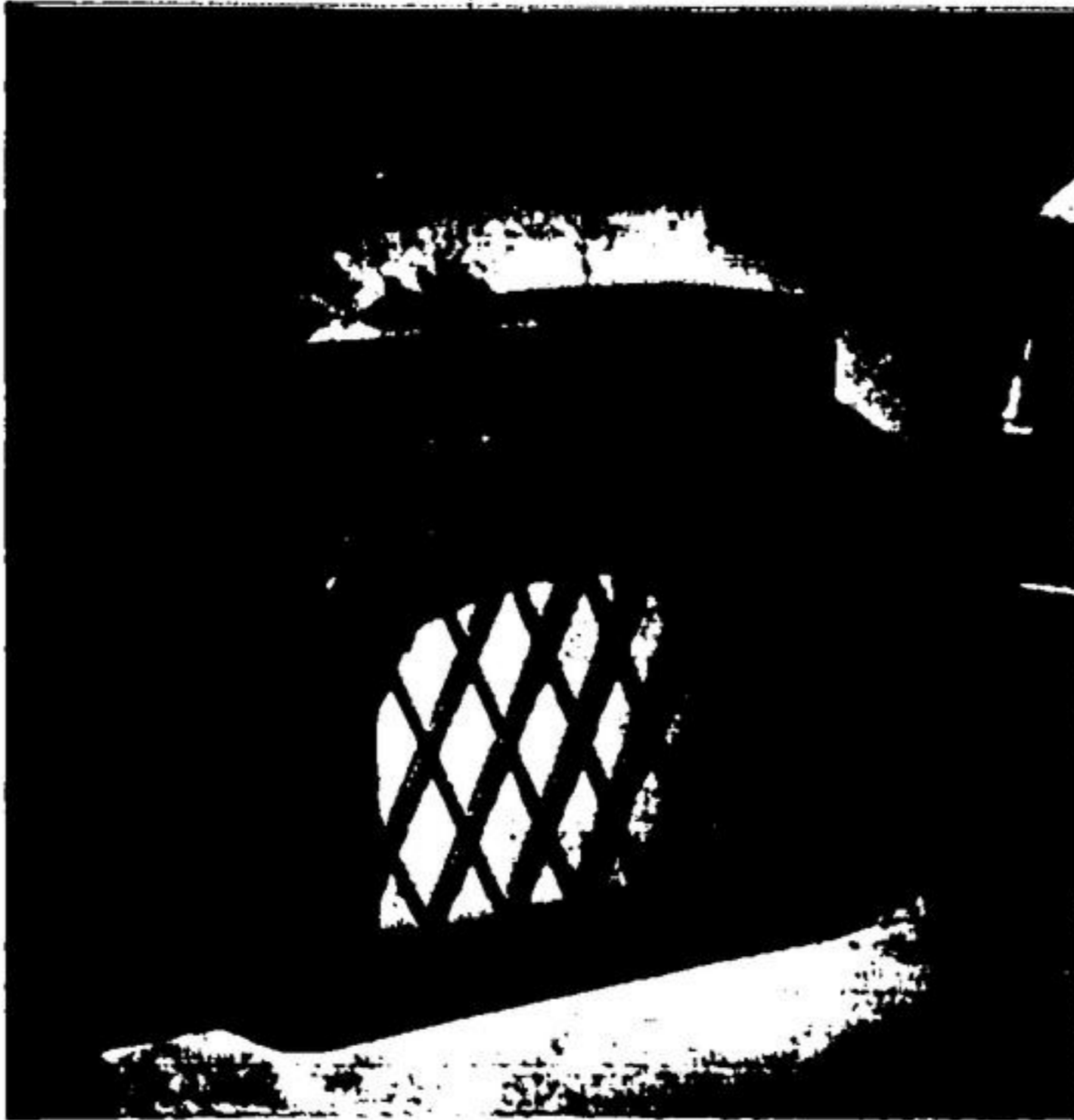
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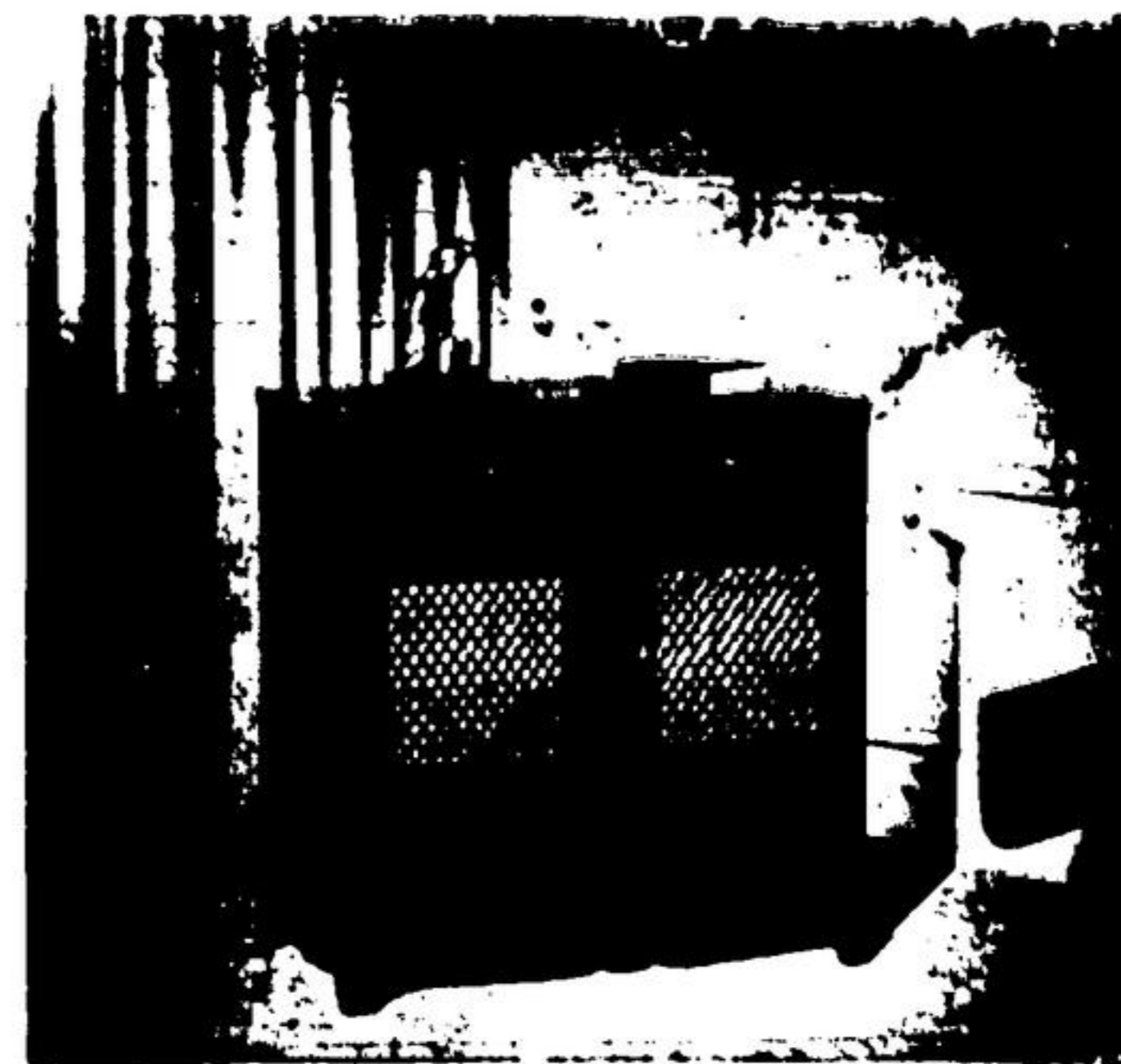


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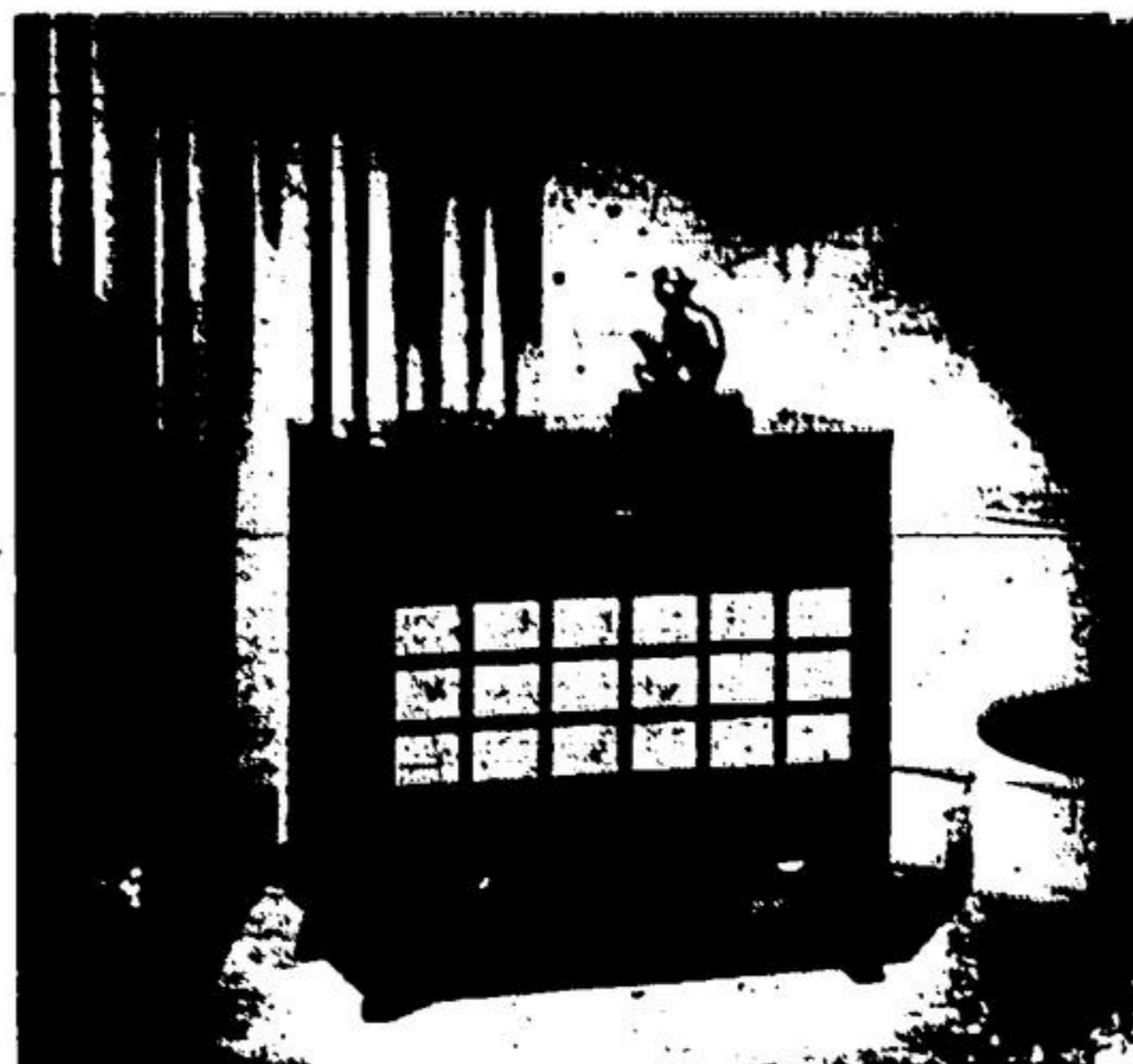


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