



A FARM LANE AND THE FIRST SNOWFALL OF THE season combine to give a picture of why a Canadian winter can often be very cold and snowy but also very photogenic. Ice encrusted maples line the lane creating a sparkling bow for farm vehicles.—Dept. of Ag. photo

Bill Smiley



Looking forward to Christmas has become something less than unadulterated joy. The thrice-blasted cards, the seven-times-blasted tree with its inevitable crooked stump, the ever-increasing cost of gifts; these and other aspects of the festive season have turned the festive part of it all, at least, into an exercise of hectic futility.

I think many will agree when I say that there's a huge sigh of relief on Christmas night when the last of the wrappings have been put away, the last of the dishes washed, and we can sit back, look at the lights and listen to music. It's a lot easier on the nerves to look back on Christmases of the past. They were probably just as frantic, but in retrospect they have a sort of rosy glow about them.

There's one that still causes me a pang of remorse and shame. My mother was making the usual huge turkey dinner, with all its entails. We were to eat about four. Around two p.m. my kid brother and I sneaked, yes, sneaked off to the matinee. About the same time, my older brother and sister went for a long walk with a friend. None of us got home until about 5.30, and there was Mom stuck with the ruins of a magnificent dinner, on which she had toiled for hours. She didn't say anything, but I, for one, felt like a rat.

I was about 10, and it was the first time I ever realized how thoughtless and selfish kids can be. Which reminds me that my own two thoughtless, selfish brats will be home this Christmas. Hugh's a vegetarian and will have his little bag of whole brown rice.

Kim's on some kind of a crazy diet. By some strange coincidence, the vegetarian becomes a carnivore and the diet goes out the window when they're home. It's tempting to think of making them a nice nut salad, and cooking a small duck for their parents only.

Another Christmas I'll never forget was that of 1944, deep in the heart of Pomerania, behind barbed wire. We didn't have to worry about buying gifts, sending cards or making long-distance calls to relatives. Maybe that's why it was so much fun. Not even a tree to wrestle with.

We exchanged gifts. I gave a pair of gloves to one of the artists, and he gave me a caricature of myself. Someone else gave a pack of smokes and received a razor blade that had been used only one week.

And there was the Christmas dinner. We had saved every scrap we could from the last of the Red Cross parcels. We had two tins of salmon with delicious creamed sauce made from powdered milk. There were potatoes au gratin (we'd hung onto a hunk of cheese). And there was that fantastic cake... crumbled Graham crackers and mashed turnips held together by a bit of marg, with two melted chocolate bars stirred in. It was cooked on top of the stove, and weighed about 18 pounds, one pound per man.

With dinner went kriegie brew. We'd saved enough prunes and sugar to make a potent potion (just add water and let it ferment for a couple of weeks.).



by Hartley Coles

COLES' SLAW

Last week we left off on the Fountain of Youth which we visited on a trip to Florida couple of months back. I noted there was no noticeable increase in vitality after our party of four each drank a glassful of the fountain's water, which issued from a spring which some enterprising promoter had encased in a building near the spot where Ponce de Leon is supposed to have landed in St. Augustine.

I tried to do a lap around one of the footpaths that bisect the park after I drank deeply but was as winded after the first 50 yards.

"Do you suppose," I casually mentioned to fellow traveller Charlie Perry, "that this stuff is only water."

"It looks like water feels like water but it sure didn't taste like water," he said distastefully. And although we looked for some great change in our outlook and kept practicing to see if we had suddenly got back into shape, there was no noticeable difference.

We were the same pair of over-40 mortals we started out as on this trip. Darn it.

Could be old Ponce was deceived by the Indians when he discovered this fountain. Since he came all that way from Spain by way of Haiti and Puerto Rico, the Indians weren't going to disappoint him by announcing the spring contained only water. So they told him if he kept drinking he would remain perpetually youthful.

A few years later they finished him off in his prime with an arrow. He never really did find out if he would remain youthful. But you know old Ponce was 61 when they polished

him off. He could have had some doubts.

St. Augustine is the oldest city in North America and it is only in the last few years that it has made much of its Spanish heritage. The old Spanish quarter is being renovated and retains a flavor unlike any other Florida city we visited. It has a beautiful waterfront and promenade along the bay, ringed with palms that stir in the breeze. But the day we were there the thermometer climbed to a warm 95 degrees that made me fairly melt.

The other members of the party felt the same way. Florida, we decided almost with one accord, was for the birds. In this case



Capture the glow of Christmas . . .

It is Christmas again and like many other Yule-tide seasons it is difficult to find anything to say that has not already been said before, and better, than this editorial writer could do.

To capture the glow of Christmas and its potential we resort to carols and symbols. We watch the faces of children singing a carol, marvel at the meaning of life which was brought into the world by a Babe and recapture some of the conviction that God is alive and well.

There also are many things we can do on the personal level to bring back the real meaning of the festival. We particularly like the expression of Christmas that Mary and Pat McKenzie sent out this Christmas. "If you like it and wish to share it among your friends, please feel free to do so,"

they said in greeting, and we'd like to share it with our readers:

"This Christmas mend a quarrel . . . seek out a forgotten friend . . . dismiss suspicion . . . and replace it with trust . . . write a letter, share some treasure give a soft answer . . . encourage youth . . . manifest your loyalty in word and deed . . . keep a promise . . . find the time . . . forego a prodge . . . forgive an enemy . . . listen . . . apologize if you are wrong . . . try to understand . . . fight envy . . . examine your demands on others . . . think first of someone else . . . appreciate others . . . be kind . . . be gentle . . . laugh a little . . . laugh a little more . . . deserve confidence . . . take up arms against malice . . . deary complacency . . . express your gratitude . . . go to church . . . welcome a stranger . . . gladden the heart of a

stranger . . . take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth . . . love children . . . speak your love . . . speak it once again . . . Christmas is celebration, that there is no celebration that compares with the realization of its true meaning with the sudden stirring of the heart that has extended itself toward the core of life. Then, only then, is it possible to grasp the significance of the first Christmas, to savor in the inward ear the sweet music of the angel choir, to envision the star struck sky, and glimpse behind the eyelids, the ray of light that fell athwart in a darkened path and changed the world."

—Author unknown.

We wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas and the best wishes of the season.

Free Press Editorial Page

The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, December 22, 1971 C1

Your cards reveal character . . .

Guess what the psychoanalysts are studying now. . . Christmas cards, says Tony Duncan in the Leamington Post.

They say: If someone sends you a black card, he is an eccentric.

An orange card is chosen by someone desperate to make an impression.

Purple (especially purple with gold)—any purple on the card means the sender is pompous.

A predominantly white card is sent by those who have something to hide.

If a woman chooses a red card, she

lacks confidence. Men who pick red cards are henpecked or at least willing to be dominated.

Blues are chosen by intellectuals with strong imaginations. But they are very selfish.

Pink by insecure persons.

Yellow cards show an egotistic character; gold ones reveal the desire for dignity; silver ones show the person suffers from a deep inferiority complex.

Green cards show you have a superiority-complex and beige ones

mean you're a blah, no-personality kid. Makes you wonder what color the psychoanalysts send.

And the report goes even further. . . into design.

Religious cards reveal great sincerity; animals are selected by those who are disappointed in people; funny cards are sent by people who are boring.

So, Your Christmas cards give you away. We suppose it all means you don't put them on the mantel any more. The proper place now is the couch.

Turtles not a lot of fun . . .

The action of the Halton County Board of Education in supporting a resolution that would limit the sale of pet turtles to anyone other than zoos, universities or other post-secondary educational institutions or to other such persons as the board may authorize, could be a real blow to turtle lovers all over the country.

Apparently the predominant reason for the Board's action was statistics from a study carried out in Alberta. In that province the disease commonly associated with pet turtles has increased from two cases in 1968 to 64 in 1970.

Many people will be surprised to

know the pet turtles children love to keep are sources of disease. Turtles look like innocuous critters with no ill designs on anyone.

The British Broadcasting Corporation recently had a speaker on the BBC Women's Hour who proclaimed:

"Don't think there can be another creature in the world that it is possible to own and yet ignore so completely as you can a tortoise. It's not a bit of bother to anybody. It goes quietly about, keeping itself to itself, not shouting or getting into fights. It doesn't make muddy paw-marks. You

don't have to house-train a tortoise, or make a hut for it, or provide a little dish with 'Tortoise' on the side. In short, the tortoise is the ultimate ideal pet for the animal lover who isn't all that keen on animals.

"The one drawback is that a tortoise is not an awful lot of fun."

Obviously the world's turtles have been masquerading under insidious colors pretending to be nothing more than house movers, while carrying insidious disease inside their shells. But the shell has been broken. Herr Turtle has been exposed.

The problem now is—What will we do with the turtles we already have?

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 27, 1951

To a crowded parish hall the children of St. Alban's Sunday School presented their annual Christmas concert Friday. This was the first concert held in the new parish hall. Recitations were given by Susan Wilson, David Hargrave, Marian Buxton, Mary Hunter, Sarah Lazenby. A piano solo by Peggy Oakes, a violin solo by Sheila Paul and guitar selection by Les Doby provided music. Amusing skits were presented by Miss C. Oakes, D. Clarke and Miss D. Capper's classes. Mr. Sutton's class did gymnastics. Certificates of merit were given to children who have not missed more than six Sundays—Sylvia Jones, Marjorie Ware, Donald Luxton, Dianne Newton, Marion Luxton, Joan Courtney, Jim Lindsay, Donald Lindsay, Sandra Hargrave, David Hargrave, Sally John, Jessie Ware, Margaret Price, John Price, Ruth Ann Leatherland and Rickie Henderson.

The annual meeting of the Bible Society took the form of a fireside at Knox Church. Officers elected were president Murray Coles, secretary-treasurer Charles Landborough, Gordon Oder, Lorne Weick, Stanley Cripps, plus the ministers of the four Protestant churches.

Staff members of the Globe and Mail sent out attractive Christmas cards, with a picture of a group of girls in the doorway of St. John's church, Rockwood, taken by Esther Taylor.

Over 300 children of Beardmore and Co. employees spoke to Santa at the annual party in the Roxy theatre. Professional entertainers were introduced by master of ceremonies R. R. Parker.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 22, 1921.

The bright sunny weather on Christmas Day induced larger numbers than usual to attend church services.

Fifty years ago a good Christmas turkey could be bought in Acton for a dollar. Those who could afford turkey for dinner last Monday paid \$7 or \$8 for their Christmas

bird. The members of the Sunday School of St. Joseph's church had a very enjoyable evening in the parish hall Wednesday. A lengthy program was carried out with much credit, including choruses, We Boys recitation by Tommy Gibbons, Little Orphan Annie recited by Miss Madeleine Gibbons; My First Recitation, Kathleen Kelly; The Night Before Christmas by Irene Dunne; other numbers by Mrs. Byrne, Carney Byrne, Marguerite Costello Dorothy Campbell, Eddie Gibbons, Francis Gibbons, Lily Byrne. There were also songs and drills.

Home for Christmas: Ernest Black, Mildred Matthews, Una Kenney, Bertha, Ernest and Roy Brown, Margaret McDonald, Ruby Clark, Bertie Smith, Austin Reid, Jack Kennedy, Melburn Overholt, Neil Gibbons, Heber Williams, Jean O'Brien, Myrtle and Ettie Dills, Linton Kenney, Mrs. Margaret Warren, Miss Helen and Mr. Fred, Miss Mary MacPherson, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Matthews, Toronto, were at Postmaster Matthews. Mr. Matthews has never missed a Christmas since

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 31, 1896.

The post office officials have had a busy time with extra heavy mails the past week. The mild weather of the past few days has caused a rapid melting of the snow. However the weather for Christmas was of the old-fashioned order. Today is the last day of Leap Year, girls.

The Free Press had the pleasure of entertaining at dinner on Monday Mr. David Fraser, the special correspondent of the Aberdeen, Wash., Recorder who is en route on foot from Aberdeen to Boston Mass. By this feat of walking 5200 miles he earns a purse of \$3000. He is the first man ever granted a pass to walk over the G.T.R. Mr. J. Fyfe returned last week from Rossland B.C. where he was prospecting for several months. He has great faith in the future of this rapidly growing city.

Mr. Nunnain Lindsay Jr. is very ill at Limehouse and since Saturday his case has been serious.

A social dance was held at the home of Mr. Plummer, Eden Mills, on Christmas night.

The fine new home of John Duff Esq., on the Erin and Eramosa town line at Rockwood, was the scene of a very enjoyable surprise party on Christmas evening. The visitors lost no time in merrily "tripping the light fantastic." The evening's pleasures were kept up until a late hour.

Now is the time to subscribe for a good, moral, newsy and interesting paper and you cannot do better than by subscribing to the Free Press.

Sunday Schools and school have held the usual Christmas festivities.

G. B. Ryan and Co., Guelph's two buyers left Monday for Europe to buy spring goods, sailing from New York, by S.S. Teutonic.

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