

The Christmas Nightgown

A Short Story Complete in This Issue.

The youngest Sunday School teacher was dressing for the Christmas concert—and she was crying. Suddenly she dried her eyes and began to scold her reflection in the boarding house mirror.

"You are a fine looking sight to go to a concert with those red eyes and that swollen nose. For pity's sake cheer up, what would mother and Lena think of you for howling like that?"

But the mere mention of the loved names brought a fresh flood of tears for she knew what a disappointing Christmas this was going to be for Mother and poor lame Lena, for their great money-making scheme had not materialized and she could not even go home for the holiday.

"Cheer up," she admonished herself again, "put on your best clothes and go and dress your Sunday School class for their 'Goodnight drill.'"

Rather defiantly she went to her trunk and chose the very daintiest lingerie she could find, beautiful filmy party things that had been fashioned so carefully by Mother's clever fingers. They seemed singularly out of place with her cheap little office suit but,

as she told herself bitterly, they were no use anyway.

When she reached the hall she found the usual excitement behind the scenes—mothers adjusting hair-ribbons and sashes on their small squirming daughters, a nervous boy trying in vain to learn the last verse of his recitation, distracted teachers trying to collect the right children for the different drills for last minute rehearsals and to explain to them just where they came in the program. The Youngest Teacher marshalled nine of her ten pupils in one corner to see if they all had the required nightgowns and candlesticks for the drill. Such dainty nightgowns they were, trimmed with lace and tucks and ribbons, most of them having been made by loving hands especially for the occasion.

"Please Teacher, Daisy will be here soon," volunteered one little girl, "her mother is sick and she is coming with her big sister, Dora."

"Oh, here they are now," said the teacher with a sigh of relief, "come Daisy, and let me see if you know your verse. Thank you Dora, just leave the parcel on the table and I'll get Daisies nightgown out of it as soon as we are finished. Your drill comes before ours so you must hurry."

When the little rehearsal was over she opened the newspaper parcel and gasped with horror as the contents fell out on the table. Daisy's nightgown was bright pink striped flannelette with high neck and long sleeves! A nice warm serviceable nightgown but not one to wear in a Sunday School drill.

"Whatever will I do," the Young Teacher almost sobbed, "the poor child simply cannot go on the platform in that thing when all the other kiddies have such pretty ones—and I can't hurt her feelings by telling her it is not good enough for her to wear I'll hide it, that's what I'll do, and perhaps I may be able to think of some solution of the problem."

Presently Daisy came running to her with a very woebegone face. "Please, teacher," she wailed, "we can't find my nightgown Dora says she left it right there on the table but it's gone and we've looked and looked for it and I can't be in the drill."

The Young Teacher had a sudden inspiration.

"There isn't time to look for it any longer now, dear, but it will turn up afterwards. And certainly you will be in the drill I have something you can wear. Just wait till I hide behind this screen to take it off."

The filmy chemise which was slipped over Daisy's head a few moments later was a thing of the most exquisite workmanship. Daisy couldn't appreciate the fine hemstitching, the tiny handrun tucks, the dainty tating and the fairy-like sprays of embroidery but said she spozed it would do seeing that her nightgown was lost.

After the drill was over many willing hands were helping to take off the little girl's costumes, for Santa Claus was coming and the children must hurry and get in the front seats which had been reserved for them.

A certain very wealthy lady, whose daughter was to be married shortly happened to be helping Daisy and as the child dashed off to join the others she was left standing with the chemise in her hand.

"Just look at this beautiful thing," she exclaimed, "how in the world did that queer little child happen to have it on?"

The owner of the garment blushed. "It's mine," she said, "I lent it to the poor little thing because she had brought the most atrocious nightgown to wear in the drill. It would have broken her heart to keep her out of the drill and Christmas disappointments are so much worse than any other kind."

"Do tell me where you got it, my dear, I would love to get some handmade things like that for my daughter."

"Why, I have a whole trunkful of them at my boarding house, my mother and my lame sister make them and I am supposed to sell them. I haven't been able to find any customers and we are all so disappointed."

"Well, you have found a customer now, just tell me where that boarding house is and I will be there tomorrow to buy the whole trunkful if the other things are anything like this."

The next day the Youngest Teacher wrote a letter which filled the lonely Mother and Sister with joy, for it told them that their business had succeeded after all and that their own dear sales agent would be home on Christmas morning.

Weighty Porker

One of the largest, if not the largest hogs ever butchered in Renfrew County was killed on Monday on the farm of Mr. H. Stressman, at Locksley. The animal was fifteen months old and made 515 pounds of pork. The two hams alone weighed 90 pounds. It was a Berkshire bred hog.

—Renfrew Mercury

PLOWMEN'S ASSOC. ATTAINS OBJECTIVE

The following report relative to the work carried on during the past year by the Ontario Plowmen's Association has been submitted by James McLean of Richmond Hill and gives a concise resume of the years activities as well as several observations which are interesting and valuable.

Mr. McLean is a past president of the organization and one of the foremost advocates and authorities on good plowing in the Province of Ontario.

The Ontario Plowmen's Association is one of the youngest of the agricultural societies of Ontario but it can make the proud boast that in the few years since it came into existence, it has actually realized its original aim and in every County and district in the Province has organized its annual plowing matches and competitions. In some cases we have gone beyond our expectations, as there are several counties where two and even three competitions are held.

This year saw many new Field Days and arrangements are under way for a further increase in 1927. The chief reason for this remarkable expansion is the whole-hearted support accorded the movement by the farmers and business men of the different communities and by our Agricultural societies, the Seed Growers Association, the Canadian National Exhibition and our Great Royal Winter Fair. These organizations lend a hand because they recognize that the plowmen's Association is promoting the real prosperity of our Province not only by teaching our farmers how to till the soil but also by promoting neatness and attractiveness around our farm houses, a knowledge of the best varieties of grain and seeds and an increased interest in securing better live stock. Our minister of agriculture—the Hon. John S. Martin—(and no province ever had a better), expresses his pride in the fact that our Association is the largest of its kind in the world by donating a handsome silver cup for the best plowed land at the big Provincial match.

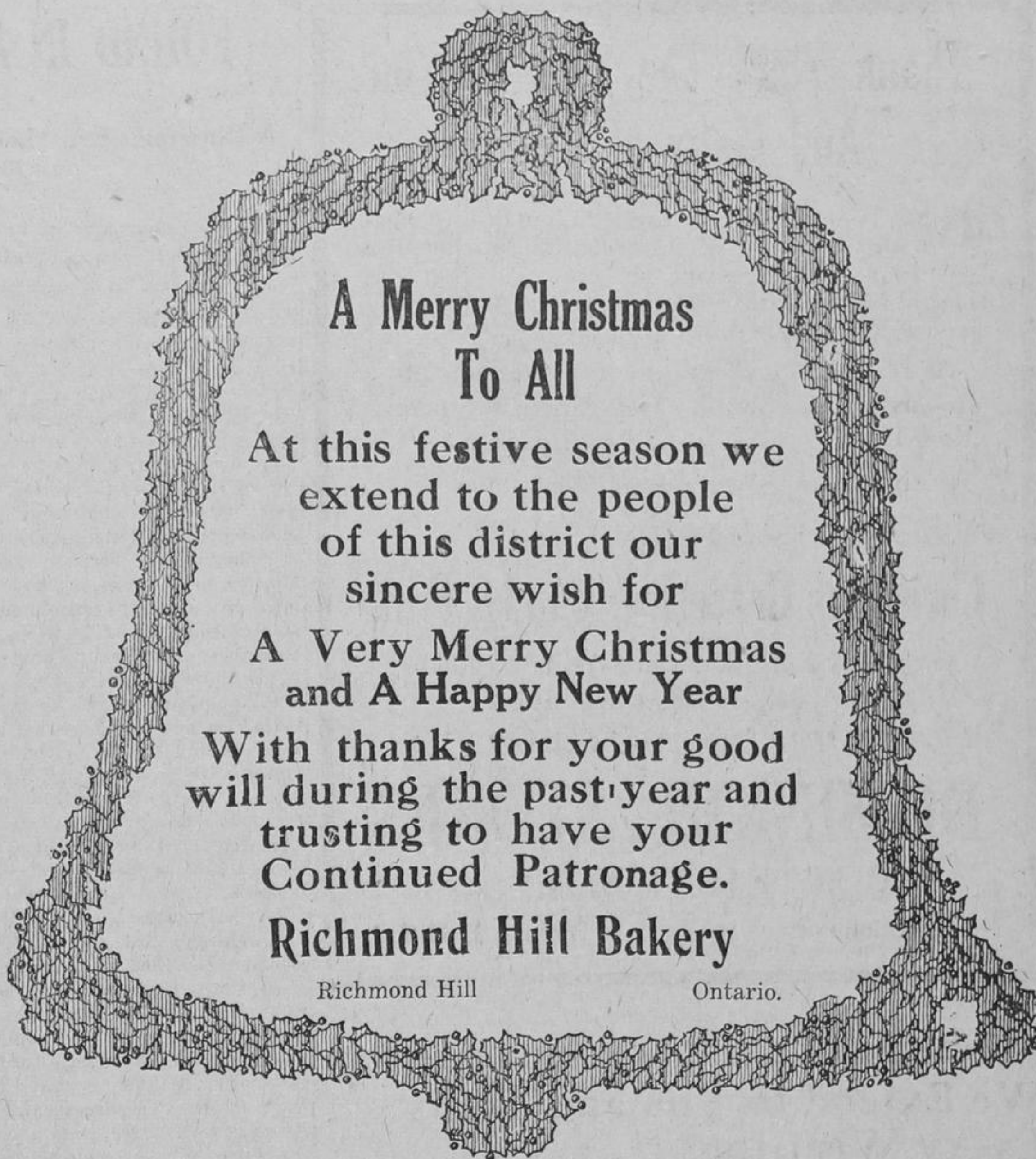
In regard to general farm plowing for the year 1926, I can see much improvement in the various counties. The excessive and unprecedented wet weather that prevailed during the late summer and fall left a large acreage unplowed and in consequence much Spring plowing will have to be done for next year's crop. While of course unavoidable, this is to be regretted as spring plowing is unsuited to some soils especially if drought ensues after the planting season. An examination of the plowed areas showed clearly the influence of the work of the association. The absence of high crowns, crooked furrows, and wide crooked finishes was very noticeable and in travelling by train and motor from end to end of our province, I heard frequent comments on the well-plowed fields and on the increasing attractiveness of our homesteads in every particular. I have also remarked the more general use of skimmers, especially in Eastern Ontario. These are indispensable for the proper covering of grass, stubble and weeds. More interest is being shown in the jointer plow, which with its skimmer attachment for cutting and covering weeds makes it one of the best for general work.

It is gratifying to note that the plow manufacturers of to-day are studying and experimenting as never before on types of bottoms with skimmer attachment for hand or tractor work. By their whole-hearted co-operation they are winning the sympathy and gratitude of the farmers and are promoting the work of the farm, which can only prosper as farmer and manufacturer work hand in hand.

Our Provincial Plowing Match was a real success this year. Stubble and sod plowing were never so satisfactory and though the wet weather interfered with the success of the tractors, some exceptional work was done in this line also. Some new devices and inventions will show to better advantage in a drier season.

The weather also interfered very seriously with the competitions of the Junior Farmers' Organization, many of which could not be carried out at all. Bruce County still keeps up its fine reputation with some splendid plots. Ontario County also had some boys' plots that it would be hard to beat, and will have some real plowmen ready for our Provincial next year. And many of the other counties might also be mentioned.

I am sure we all regret that the work of the boys in Muskoka and Parry Sound could not be judged on account of snow. Splendid work was done in preparation for this event by Mr. Tipper, Agricultural representative. He and his groups have our hearty sympathy and we are sure they will have better luck another year.



A Merry Christmas To All

At this festive season we extend to the people of this district our sincere wish for

A Very Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year

With thanks for your good will during the past year and trusting to have your Continued Patronage.

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SNOWSHOE TRAILS IN NORTHERN WOODS



The forests in winter time present an attractive appearance. Photographs show: Upper left, typical winter scene after snowfall; lower, one of the intelligent husky dogs of the Northland; Upper right, lunch time in the bush; lower, dog team on the trail.

"Blanc Bec Trails," a new out-of-doors feature which will take the visitor out into the forests of Northern Ontario and Quebec under the guidance of experienced woodsmen and trappers, will be operated this winter by several outfitters in the northern sections of these two provinces, it is announced by the Tourist Department of the Canadian National Railways. These have been arranged to meet the demand for facilities for spending a winter outing in the woods and the men who will operate them are outfitters who have had wide experience in caring for hunting and fishing parties. Travel will be over trap lines, on well-beaten trails, by dog team and snowshoes and the visitor will be able to make woods trips of from 50 to 200 miles, under conditions which will provide for the comfort and convenience of the inexperienced woodsman.