

THE HOUSE OF CHRISTMAS

By Edgar Daniel Kramer

The night is glowing on the pine boughs and the holly
In the House of Christmas that my dreamings ever know
And sweet, childish voices, jubilant and jolly
Hymn the Babe of Bethlehem, born long years ago.

Through the starlit stillness the Christmas bells are ringing
From the highest hilltop to the deepest glen,
And the House of Christmas joins in their singing,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem! Peace on earth to men!"

Once again the Wise Men walk in the ways of dreaming,
Till they find the manger where the Christ Child lies
On the breast of Mary, in whose eyes are gleaming
All the lights of glory from beyond the starry skies.

Once again the Shepherds come across the hills and meadows,
Bringing gifts of soft white wool and flax that they have
spun,
While the cattle, solemn-eyed, wonder in the shadows
And the Wise Men kiss the feet of Mary and her Son.

The House of Christmas fills my heart and oh, the bells are ring-
ing!
The Christmas candles beckon me and I grow young again
As I hear child voices and all the glad stars singing,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem! Peace and good will to men!"

TOO OLD FOR TOYS

BY MRS. NESTOR NOEL

People are very particular to give their children enough to eat. I have seen breakfast consist of fruit, porridge, eggs and bacon, toast, marmalade and coffee. This would have been enough for a good dinner, but it was simply a breakfast. Imagine what the dinner in such a home would be! Certainly most children nowadays—provided their parents are able to supply it—have more than enough to eat.

Yet while their little bodies are stuffed, their hearts are often starved for want of toys.

"I suppose you are busy buying toys," I remarked to a mother one day a few weeks before Christmas.

"Oh, no," she said. "My children are too old for toys." The eldest one was not yet nine!

"What do you give them?" I asked. She told me that she filled their stockings with peanuts, oranges and candy! More to eat! From time to time, I had taken these children to toys, and I knew, by their delight in my gifts that they would have appreciated toys more than anything else.

Some mothers are quick to say: "My children are too old for toys." I often think they say this because they want the children to help more with the work. After all, it is the children themselves who should decide whether or not they are "too old for toys." Childhood can come but once. Why force your children to grow up too soon?

I have noticed that when there were many in a family, the eldest was always supposed to be "too old for toys." Of course the child was not necessarily so. I knew a girl once who had been treated as if she were a grown-up since the age of four! It came from being the eldest of the family. At the age of seventeen, she found herself free, with money to spend. One of the first things she bought herself was a doll. She did not play with it for her years, in which one plays with dolls were gone forever. She sewed for it, however, making it exquisite clothes, and she kept it in her trunk, looking at it frequently. Perhaps she realized how many games she might have played with a doll, and all she had missed in childhood because her mother had persisted in saying, "She is too old for toys."

A way to prove that your child likes toys is to provide an opportunity of choice for the next present. Nine children out of ten will choose toys!

At Christmas time and birthdays, I so often have seen disappointment in children's faces that I feel like writing in huge capitals:

"MOTHERS! ATTENTION! PLEASE GIVE YOUR CHILDREN TOYS!"

Christmas in the Farmyard.

There was once a small girl who insisted upon giving every animal about the place a Christmas dinner. Of course she was laughed at a good deal, and assured that the cats and dogs and chickens did not know Christmas from any other day, but she stuck to her point, and the pets were lined up, and fed all sorts of forbidden goodies. How they must have wondered what it all meant! It wasn't very much, and of course the animals promptly forgot it. They acted very much like humans after all. They stuffed disgruntledly, then sat around and licked their chops and paws, which was their way of using table napkins and finger bowls; they played a little in a feeble, stupid sort of way, then they lay down in a quiet corner and went to sleep. But the instinct that prompted the small girl to see that even the animals joined in the fun, grew and blossomed, and bore fruit, so that in after years, it enabled her to do something lasting and worthwhile for the animals that suffer so needlessly from people's carelessness and cruelty.



Young Folks' Community Christmas Tree.

We had one last year and here is how we did it: About half a dozen of the young folks got together and decided to have this tree. We knew it would require some money, so a committee visited every man and woman in the community and fully explained the project, and as a result quite a substantial sum was raised. One man donated the tree, a big evergreen, and we had it dug up by an expert and planted in a central position. This tree will be used again this year, as it kept right on growing.

We were fortunate to be near electric light wires, so for a very nominal sum had the electric light company string a wire to our tree. Practically all the work was done by the young folks. We wired the tree, then bought various sizes of red, white and blue electric light globes; also metal stars and some red balls. We also bought peanuts, oranges, lolly-pops and small boxes of candy.

We invited every member of the community to be at the tree at eight o'clock sharp, Christmas eve. Everybody was there. The lights were turned on and we distributed printed copies of Christmas carols. We had a good sing for about twenty minutes, then sleigh bells were heard and to the great delight of the youngsters, mingled with a little fear, Santa Claus, with a big pack, was seen coming down the road. The lights from dozens of parked automobiles were thrown on him and excitement ran high. Santa came to the group, shook hands with all, patted the children and gave each child a bag containing peanuts, candy, orange and a lolly-pop. That ended the entertainment and all went home feeling happy. The same program will be repeated this year.

Gifts for City Friends.

Are the cousins and the aunts of whom you are so fond packed away in modern apartments in the big city? Does it bother you tremendously to know what to send them for Christmas—something different from the things they see for sale and that you are sure they can use?

You perhaps have right at hand the things that would prove most acceptable, but which at first thought may seem too ordinary. Home canning is one of them.

Why not then, from your big stores of jelly, jams and pickles, pick out a dozen or half dozen cans of uniform size, wrap them attractively in papers and use the Christmas stickers; box and send to the city?

Perhaps you have that wonderful sausage which seems to be made no place, so well as on the farm. And perhaps you have bees, and the bees have fed from your own clover fields, and made you honey. With sausage and honey provided at Christmas, can't you imagine the feast completed with waffles?

I know a man who looks eagerly among his Christmas packages; until he finds his box of glasses or orange marmalade, each jelly glass wrapped in orange-colored tissue tied with a green ribbon, and a green sticker on it. This has been his gift annually from a cousin and he is sure he would be terribly disappointed not to receive it.

It may be many a day since these cousins and aunts had the black walnuts and hickory nuts of their childhood; so wouldn't a box of these be different and acceptable? And those good crisp, juicy apples—why not some of them?

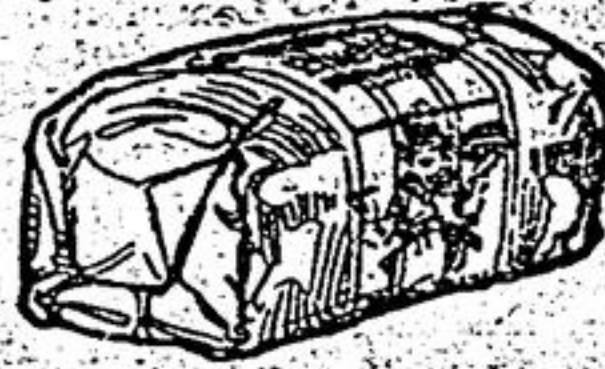
If it be a smaller offering than these mentioned, what could be cheerier than to see on opening a box a mass of the bitter-sweet berry, which is so abundant in some localities and just wanting to show its glory to the closed-in folks of the city?

A bird's Christmas tree is an inexpensive bit of charity that is often highly entertaining. Decorated with popcorn, cranberries, pieces of bread and suet, the outdoor tree is certain to attract an excited gathering of feathered guests. There is a pretty Scandinavian custom of the spare sheep. At this time of year the farmer puts out close by his barn a sheaf of grain at the top of a long pole. Who shall say that he does not thereby propitiate some kindly spirit who sees to it that the birds protect his next summer's crops from insects?

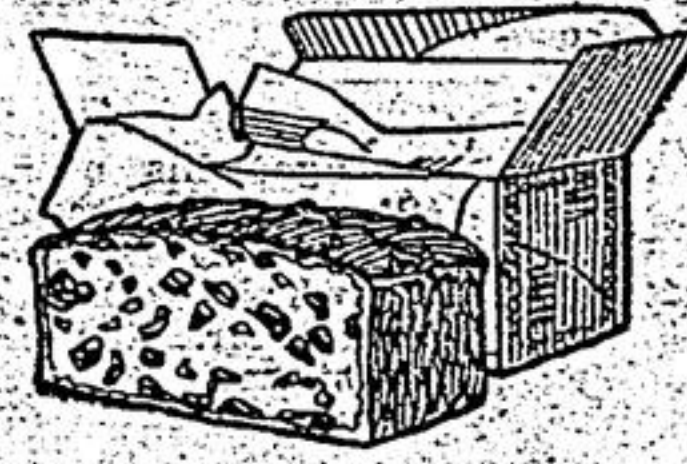


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J. L. TURNER

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White Christmas.

When Christmas hangs on high the holly-bough,

And Christmas trees bear fruit of varied blisses,

And traps are set with waxen mistletoe

As bait for kisses,

Let me not hear the crying ghosts of rain

Beyond the uncurtained pane.

Let snow fall in the night, as soft as breath,

And clothe familiar things with frosty change,

Till every bush and fence rail wears a wreath.

Lovely and strange.

Let frost shut from the window with frail faces

Those fragile, peering faces

What should I do, remembering, to-night

Those footsteps that I knew, now light as air?

Rather I choose to hear the laughing, light

Child feet on the stair—

What should I do, holding the door for them—

Frail ghosts who come not in?

—Dorothy Stockbridge.

A Yuletide Legend.

A pilgrim walked with weary tread,
He sought the Flower of Peace, in vain.

Though he found other blooms instead,
Blossoms of worldly wealth and gain.

These blossoms, dazzling to the eyes,
Soon faded; now the earth lay bare
As 'neath the cheerless Eastern skies
This pilgrim searched with zealous care.

Men scoffed at him. "Why labor on
For that which you may never find?
Why strive with evil? Peace is gone,
'Tis easier to be resigned."

But, though this counsel made him grieve,
Undaunted, steadfast on he went,
Till on that first glad Christmas Eve
His heart was filled with deep content.

He knew his weary quest would cease,
For in a humble cattle shed
At last he found the Flower of Peace
Growing beside the Christ Child's bed!

—Leslie M. Oylor.

Natural Resources Bulletin.

The Natural Resources Intelligence Service of the Dept. of the Interior at Ottawa says:

Fishing, through the ice in winter is one of the activities of farmers and settlers in many parts of Canada, especially in the neighborhood of lakes. This industry is one of considerable importance in Western Canada, particularly among the northerly lakes. The lack of railways or highways and distance from markets precludes the taking of the fish in the open season, as there are no means of packing the fresh fish for market. With winter, however, fishing is carried on very extensively, and large numbers of teams are engaged in delivering the frozen fish to the nearest railway point.

The most important fish taken is the whitefish, although pickerel, lake trout and other species are taken in considerable numbers. When taken, the fish are allowed to freeze solid, and are brought in piled up like firewood on sleighs.

The cold waters of the northern lakes produce fish of exceptional quality, the flesh not becoming soft, as is often the case with that of fish taken in the warm waters of the more southerly lakes and streams.

A large trade has been built up with the cities of Canada, as also in the middle and eastern States, and

good prices are obtained for the winter catch of fish.

In Ontario and Quebec, however, the winter fishing in the smaller lakes and rivers is done for the purpose of securing a domestic food supply, and while there is no means of knowing to what extent this is carried on, there is no doubt whatever that considerable quantities are taken. In this way, the fisheries provide a valuable source of food and a change in the diet of many who are not always within reach of a fresh meat supply.

A Happy Christmas to All.

Ye Christmaside halt, come again,
Ye joyful time of all ye years;
God rest you merry gentlemen,
And bring you health and all good cheer.

I have always thought of Christmas time as a good time—a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time. It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child Himself.—Charles Dickens.

Do not give children too much at Christmas. There is nothing more nauseating than a blasé, surfeited youngster. Encourage the children to think more about giving pleasure to those who have very little, and less about their own things. Teach them to divide up.

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